BE GOOD TO YOURSELF

NELLIE L. McCLUNG

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BE GOOD TO YOURSELF

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BE GOOD TO YOURSELF

A BOOK OF SHORT STORIES

BY

NELLIE L. McCLUNG

THOMAS ALLEN, Publisher
TORONTO CANADA

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BE GOOD TO YOURSELF

LET US BE GOOD TO OURSELVES

MOST of us are not. We remember and tell of every slip we have made. If we forget to mail a letter, keep an appointment, deliver a message, we spread the news, giving all our friends the impression that we are not reliable, forgetting that the world takes us at our own valuation.

We have stayed out late at parties, because we hadn't the nerve to break away, and then have been so tired the next morning we had not time for the bath and careful dressing which would have fortified us for the day's happenings, but instead had to dash out for the 8:20 car with the sense of guilt that comes with soiled cuffs and an unwashed skin.

We are so busy and concerned with our own and other people's affairs we have not time to choose our food wisely, and so we eat what is handiest and acquire indigestion and gloom and a sense of impending disaster. We know that whipped cream does not agree with us, but when we go out to a luncheon and it is there on the salad, satiny-white and billowy, we eat it, because we do not want to appear rude. We haven't time to walk, to read, to relax, nor to take the hair treatments we know we should have. There are so many parties and bridges, sometimes we feel

we can't face another one, but we do—poor, overworked slaves that we are!

We haven't even the grace to let ourselves forget the unpleasant happenings of life. When someone slights us, we feel so badly over it we simply have to tell someone, and so write a full account of it to our friends, thereby engraving the whole matter on the tables of our memory; and then we grieve over it, and stupidly say we wish we could forget it! When we lie awake at night, we torment ourselves by picturing how wretched we will feel the next day, instead of turning on the light and pleasantly reading the story we had intended to read the day before.

We are clever people, efficient and high-powered, but in our zeal to get things done we are forgetting the simple art of living.

Let us make a resolve—that we will begin today to relax, and loiter, and potter around, and be lazy if we feel like it once in a while, and take time to meditate, and watch the sun go down behind the hill.

Let us be good to ourselves.

WE ARE SAVED BY OUR LIMITATIONS

A BOX is a box because it has ends.
A house is a house because it has walls; a garden must have a fence.

When I was a little girl going to school, there broke out in our neighborhood at one time an epidemic of crocheting, and all the girls except me were doing miles of chains and doubles and singles, and talked mysteriously of star stitches and seed stitches and mitred corners. There was one edging they were doing that did appeal to me—it looked so easy and quick and was really beautiful with its clover leaves lying fore and aft. So I asked one of the girls to show me. Then I found out that I had slow-moving fingers. I could never make the steel hook glint and glimmer as the others could, nor could I crook my little finger in that professional curve which seemed to go with this art. I therefore found myself left out of the mystic sisterhood who fell to work at each recess and even snitched a few precious minutes under cover of a desk, during school hours.

To save my pride I had to take up a position of indifference. I claimed that I did not want "edging" on my underwear, but I remember how sad and forsaken I felt when other little girls were praised for their industry, and admiring relatives

told of the "sets' they had made. I had to do something to make up for my lack, and so I plunged into fractions and spelling, and learned to recite all the poems in the Third Reader, and when on Friday afternoons I followed Lucy Grey right out to the middle of the plank, or with appropriate gestures stood beside the Boy on the burning deck, whence all but he had fled, I knew that in that brief bright hour I had the edge on the hand-workers. I was being saved by my limitations, though I did not know it.

I wonder if women will ever show as much sense as men in the way they use their time. No man tries to do everything. He recognizes his limitations and abides by them. No man tries to make his own clothes and hats or pyjamas, nor does he undertake to keep his office clean, nor write his own letters, nor make Christmas presents. Having chosen a business or profession he attends to that and lets some one else do all these things for him.

But women, even business women, do so many things. They mend and cook and put down jams and pickles and make over their clothes, and tire their eyes making dresser scarves for people who are not greatly in need of dresser scarves, and hurry through their work to get away to the demonstration of clay modelling so that they may learn to make various little do-dads for their friends who already have more do-dads than they know what to do with. It is all a hang-over from the days when women's time was not worth any-

thing. We still have the feeling that we must do everything we can do.

I know. I am speaking out of a full and troubled heart. I too am cursed with the desire to do things I would be wise to leave alone. Right at this moment the urge is on me to make a rug like the one I saw last week at the Canadian Handicrafts Festival—the prettiest thing, hooked on canvas and made of old underwear brightly dyed, and done in splotches edged with black. There will be many hours of labor on it. Cutting the rags is a mussy job. The rug when done will not be very well done and will be worth four dollars and forty-nine cents. But I am in the throes of the idea. Everyone has her weaknesses. Mats are mine.

We have the vote. Every profession is open to us. We have been declared to be persons. There is much real work to be done. But we have not yet learned to value our time. Let us be thankful there are many things we simply cannot do. Nature has mercifully removed some temptations from us. We are saved by our limitations.

AS IN A LOOKING GLASS

IT is not given to everyone to look into the crystal of life and see ten years ahead. But the privilege came to me one day not long ago, and I got a glimpse of myself—a fleeting, terrifying glimpse.

I was on a street car, hurrying to a meeting, where I was going to introduce the speaker. I had been delayed at the last minute by one of those discursive telephone correspondents who speak in paragraphs.

Now, of course, no one can really hurry on a street car. But I was trying to push that car, with both feet, and exerting what Mr. Gandi calls "soul force" to drive it along. At every corner people stood waiting to get on—women with baby-carriages; late comers half a block away, running and waving. I begrudged the time the conductor waited for them.

A woman came on the car and sat near me, and even in my perturbed state I noticed her. She had such a familiar look, I almost spoke to her.

She began to talk to a woman across the aisle. I think the woman asked her how she was getting on, or maybe she did not need to be asked. I couldn't help hearing; not that I tried—I like to listen-in on street-car conversations.

"I am doing it all as usual," she said in a voice

that carried all over the car. "I have found out if you want a thing done, you had better do it yourself—the longer I live, the less I bother with people. Yes, I believe in co-operation—if one person does it . . ."

I drew nearer, pretending I wanted to get out of the draft.

She used her hands when she talked. "I didn't want to take it for another year, but what could I do? There was no one else who had been in it from the beginning, and I have put too much into it to let it fall down now. I know it's too much for me. My blood pressure has gone up twenty points in the last month—and there you are!

"The younger women won't be bothered. They are too busy amusing themselves. They may promise to do something, but when the day comes, they phone that Charley is coming home, or going away, or has broken his leg, or had his tonsils out, or his mother has died, or come to visit them, or something. And after listening for ten minutes, you find out they are not going to do it. So I save time by not asking them!"

I watched her, fascinated. Her hair, gray and rather stringy, was carelessly rolled in a knot under her hat, and one strand had come out, giving her that pathetic and distraught look which only a lock of misguided gray hair can give. Brown, black, or red hair can escape from its moorings and carry a certain careless charm. But gray hair has to be in its place, or its owner goes at once into the depressed class.

Her clothes were good, well made, and of be-

coming style, but they were hurriedly put on. I am sure she was answering the phone when she put on her scarf. Her hands, plump and marked with brown spots, had a smear of ink on the right second finger. Her gloves hung carelessly from her pocket; one stocking had a twist; even her glasses were smeared.

"I have been so tied up with this Festival," she said, "I have hardly had time to comb my hair, much less say my prayers. My family are all cross with me. But next year I will be out of it all, and I am going to catch up on all the things I have been missing."

Then it was that I recognized her!

Myself! Ten years hence! Myself, a little older, a little stouter. Amplified!—unless the signs were changed.

And in that blinding moment, a resolve came to me. The signs would be changed.

I leaned back in the seat. I stopped pushing the car. I put on my gloves, carefully rubbing out every wrinkle. I pulled my scarf down neatly, and using the window for a mirror adjusted my hat and pulled down enough hair to soften my face. All at once it came to me that if I were five minutes late it would not matter greatly. A new orientation of values had come to me.

The next day I had my hair cut. I bought new clothes. I joined a Golf Club. And these physical renovations were merely indicative. That revealing glimpse down the years reconstructed my mental attitude.

I can idle along now, with the cheerful abandon of a window-washer who works by the hour, with meals provided!

JANE BROWN

I DON'T know what I'll do," he said,
And a large tear splashed on his sunburnt hand;
"Here's the Spring upon us, and my wife dead!
And look at the Summer's work I've planned:
I've got new land—there'll be men to feed,
And hired girls are an extravagant breed;
They smash your dishes and waste your stuff
And never think they are getting enough,
And they always boil the tea!
My Jane always seemed so full of grit
It wasn't a bit like her to quit—
At least without saying a word to me."

"Then she wasn't ailing?" the minister said—
He came out when he heard Mrs. Brown was dead,
To try to comfort the one bereft:—
"Oh! She grumbled a little as women will
But she never cost me a doctor's bill.
Ain't this an awful way to be left?
She was a dandy, was my Jane,
Strong as a horse—and never complained;
I'll never get her like again:
Many a time when I went to bed
I'd hear her up thumping out loaves of bread;
When I came down in the morning light

There was a tableful, brown and light,
I tell you what—'twas a splendid sight!"

"I suppose you often told her so"—the minister said—
'Well—I don't know—I never was one to make a show,
But although I never said so straight,
I guess she knew I liked her gait."

"I suppose she had help," the minister said,
As he looked at the toilworn hands of the dead;
"For the house is big, and the children small,
One pair of hands could not do it all."

"Oh—we tried one girl for days and days,
But I could not stand her shiftless ways.
Jane was patient and thought she'd learn,
But that girl would break more than she could earn.
Of course we always had old Miss Frame
Out here for a week when the children came,
And I tell you it galled me to pay for a week
A dollar a day to that old freak."

"I suppose you often told your wife
That she was the joy and delight of your life;
That home wasn't home without her face
And how much you missed her from her place."

"Well—I don't know as I ever said so straight—
But I told her the house was in an awful state!

I said I was tired of cold boiled tea
And Miss Frame could not quit too soon for me:
I told her my mother never lay in bed
Three days in her life,—'till she lay there dead—
At least I've often heard that told—
She died when I was three days old."

"A splendid helpmate to you was given,—
You have children, too?"
"Yes, six or seven—
The youngest one is not real strong—
We never knew just what was wrong—
See, here are the kids—" and in two short rows
Six children sat in their Sunday clothes,
While kindfaced women everywhere
Bestowed upon them unwonted care;
But the old, sad wonder was in their eyes
Which only comes—when a mother dies.
The youngest one with the withered hand,
So young, no one thought he could understand,
But he gathered up that air of gloom
And his voice rang out in the quiet room,
And if ever a baby voiced despair,
That little one cried—"It is not fair!"

"Come out for a while," the farmer said,
"That kid's sharp voice goes through my head."

Outside 'twas a day of dazzling sun
That warns old Winter his days are done:
Cattle roamed through the oaten stacks
Enjoying the sunshine on their backs;

White pigs did long tunnelling stunts,
Filling the air with contented grunts;
A young colt frolicked beside the mare
Who nosed it about with motherly care
As she lazily yawned in the soft Spring air.

"You've a lot of machines," the minister said,
As he looked around at the rakes and drills
That had overflowed from the big red shed;
"You've paid some big machinery bills."
Machines were there, blue, green, and red,
And a threshing machine with a canvas head,
While broken ones lay old and sere
As if they had lain there many a year.

"We have to have them," the farmer said,
"No matter what we have to pay,
For the season's short—and it's up to us
To make the best of every day;
These things can neither be borrowed nor lent,
And it's foolish to try to save a cent.
You have to use your judgment though,
Folks try to do you every day,
And it's not more than a month ago
Since a fellow came all thro' this way—
And he surely was a smooth-tongued gink—
And he tried to sell me a kitchen sink.
Jane would have taken it on the jump,
For she always did want a kitchen pump;
But I showed her it would bring no return
And fifty dollars is a lot to burn."

Then the neighbors came, and they laid her
away,
And they blamed the Lord in the same old way;
And they wondered how if God is good
He could take a mother from her brood;
But looking down on that poor, tired face,
The minister knew what had taken place;
The Great Physician from the skies
Had looked down with His kindly eyes
And ordered the treatment He thought best,
"For Jane Brown I order change and rest!"
Then He did as the country doctors do,
Not only wrote, but filled it too.
And the minister blushed as he read the word,
"Inasmuch as it hath *pleased* the Lord."
And all the way home the graybird's song
Piped out, "It's wrong—it's wrong—it's wrong!"

Mrs. Brown passed out on St. Patrick's Day,
Mr. Brown dried his eyes about the end of May;
He painted his buckboard and looked abroad,
And decided he'd try Bud Thompson's Maud.
For Maud was willing, and big and strong,
And he thought they'd be able to get along.

So he went to Maud and stated his case,
And he said he thought she'd a lovely face;
He always had liked her quick, smart ways,
And he believed he'd marry her some of these
days;
How would she like to be his wife?
But Maud replied—"Not on your life—
Of endless toil I know I'd tire

And for an early grave I have no desire;
You've made a success of working land,
So at housework why not try your hand?
When you have worked a month or two
You'll know the truth your poor wife knew;
Your work has been done by four-horse team,
By man and tool and gasoline;
Your yard looks like a machinery shower
But your house was run on woman power;
And one day of course, that power gave out!
And that is how it comes about
That you must fill that woman's place,
And you think I have a lovely face!
But I am wise—and so decline,
You're very kind—but not for mine!"

John Brown drove slowly down the lane
And wished he had not lost poor Jane.

LORETTA JANE. That was her name. She looks it too—a dark, angular, solemn-faced woman with a gloomy eye—and she sighed deeply when I showed her through the house.

"Eight rooms and a bath," she said wearily, "and I suppose no room for a garden."

I confessed there was not. Instinctively, I felt that she did not approve of us.

She decided that she would try us for a month, however, and began to work next day. I saw at once that she knew her business, but there was a detached air of indifference about her that impressed me unfavorably. Her mind was evidently far away, and I could see that she merely tolerated us.

Before the end of the month, scarlet fever broke out, and the two children took it. When I went into the kitchen to tell her the children were sick, I fully expected that she would give me notice, for if she did not like us when we were all well, it was not to be expected that we would stand any chance when fifty percent. of us were sick.

"Loretta Jane," I began politely, "I am afraid the two children have taken scarlet fever—they have some of the symptoms, and I am keeping

them in bed; they are very healthy children and it is not likely—"

She interrupted me there.

"Do you know what to do for them? Are you any good around sick people? Have you given them physic? Are they running a temperature?"

She was on her way upstairs as she fired these questions at me, and the answers did not interest her at all, for she was in the children's room herself making her own observations by the time I caught up to her.

"We will separate them," she said quietly. "Fred will go in the spare room."

I obeyed her without a word—she had a way with her. "There is nothing to fear," she assured me, "when the cases are taken in time."

From the day the children took sick, Loretta Jane became a new person—a friendly, pleasant, cheerful, happy woman who took charge of all of us. She washed, cooked, swept, and dusted. More than that she sang at her work, and in her spare time told stories to the sick children. Everyone of us fell in love with her and wondered why we ever thought her dull and uninteresting.

After the children were better, she cleaned and fumigated every room in the house, and her happiness seemed to increase as she progressed from room to room.

About that time I began to brag about her to my friends, and filled more than one of them with envy when I told them she had cleaned the silver before breakfast. I did not tell them that she had sniffed a few times when I brought out some

badly tarnished pieces, and muttered something about fine old silver being wasted on some people. At least it sounded like that. I did not catch her exact words, but I knew I was being reproved!

When the house-cleaning was all done and the children were able to be out again, I noticed to my dismay that Loretta Jane's enthusiasm for us began to flag. We ceased to interest her and her old gloomy manner returned. I suggested that she have two afternoons off instead of one, but this was received with scorn.

I decided hastily to give a dinner before she had time to leave me, for I felt sure she would give me notice any day. With the extra work of getting ready for the dinner her cheerfulness returned, and when the night came I had every reason to be proud of her excellent cooking and perfect service. Evidently she lived on great occasions.

After the dinner she drooped again, and found life flat and stale. She grew petulant with the children, and disposed to argue on matters of religion with me. Then I decided to give a dance for my niece. When I told Loretta Jane about it, she roused herself like an old fire horse when he hears the gong. And the dance was a great success!

That was last week. Now I am worried to know what to do! I can't afford to entertain all the time. The children are not at all likely to be sick. The house is clean. The preserving season is a long way off! Loretta Jane, with her thirst

for excitement, begins to wear on me; for I am a quiet woman and I long for rest.

I know what would perk her up!

If I should die tonight—or even break a leg—or sprain an ankle—or get called away to attend the bedside of a dying relative! But I am not prepared to do any of these things—and I am worried! I know now why girls like Loretta Jane are called "Generals."

I know she is going to leave me. I feel it coming. We are too hopelessly healthy and normal. Our steadygoing commonplaceness is smothering her! She will leave us—unless some misfortune overtakes us.

I wonder if she has not a few prototypes in life, though not so clearly defined—the people who are kind to their sick friends, but neglect their well friends; who will step in only when trouble comes; who can bear great sorrows well, but go down under the little irritating things; who will write a cheque to cover the big obligations of life, but have no small change for everyday use.

LOST YEARS

I KNOW where my lost years have gone, and the manner of their going.

They have been talked away by myself and other people whose conversational efforts I have inspired.

I have a fatal gift for starting monologues. If there is a vein of idle oral ore anywhere in my vicinity, I will be as sure as fate to tap it with some innocent word.

This morning I began to telephone the women of our club to see how many of them would entertain a delegate for the convention next week. The first woman said she had not been well and could not bear to have a stranger in the house she was so nervous, and then I, unhappy woman that I was, instead of letting it go at that, asked her what was the matter. It was none of my business. I had only one concern this morning, delegates, but the foolish words were uttered! I had asked her what was the matter! She told me. She kept back nothing. She began in the middle of her story and worked both ways. I could feel that she had reached for a cushion and settled down for a pleasant morning. One foot went asleep, and I began to wonder if a receiver could really grow to a person's cheekbone, and all the time my conscience pounded it into me that I had asked

for it. Delegates, homeless and accusing, walked the aisles of my imagination and still the recital went on.

I cannot even take in the day's supply of ice from a perfectly new ice-man without opening up a conversational viaduct, over which goes heavy cargoes of domestic and social happenings. And barbers forsake their honorable calling altogether to stand before me waving their scissors in an effort to solve once and for all the immigration problem of Canada. And once when I told one of them to get on with his work, he was so anxious to get it all said he did not notice what he was doing until he ran out of hair. And I had to wear my hat for a month.

And I must confess that some of the talking I have done myself!

Often I go to meetings hoping to learn something, and slipping into a back seat I am prepared to listen and absorb the words of wisdom that fall from the speaker's lips. Just about the time I have found out what it is all about and am beginning to be glad I came I hear the chairman say, "I see we have Mrs. McClung with us this evening, and no doubt she would like to bring us a message."

"Would like to," do you get that?

I wonder what there is in my face which makes people think that I am always holding up my hand for permission to speak?

And so it is that down the pleasant but windy ways of chatter my time—too much of it has gone.

A HOLIDAY AT HOME

THE Weavers have just come back from Bermuda. The Browns are sailing next week for Europe and will see the Passion Play. One branch of our family is leaving tomorrow to drive to the Coast, with every contraption they have seen or heard of on their car, including a meat-roaster on the engine, guaranteed to do a roast in forty miles. Everywhere I go, people are discussing road maps, steamship sailings, travellers' tweeds, hotel reservations. And I, destined to spend the two months at home, can only contribute to the chorus: "Won't that be lovely!"

I want to go. I want to hear and see the little red-bird in Bermuda whose song is "Don't Worry!" repeated five times, no more and no less. I want to feel the New Testament simplicity of the little Bavarian town. I want to cook a meal at Macleod Meadows.

We went today to another Trousseau Tea—Mrs. Burns, (No, she is not getting married; she is going to New York.) There I met two other women who are going to be at home all summer, and all in a flash the idea came to us, and we began to hold our own with the out-going tide.

Mrs. Brophy struck the first blow in our defence when she said it was every woman's patriotic duty to know her own city before she

travelled about. Mrs. Evans followed this with a neat quotation about "digging more deeply in our own backyard."

I did not enjoy the backyard reference, knowing what I did about my own, but I endorsed the sentiment. My backyard has weeds in it: chickweed, lamb's quarters, twitch grass—all the old favorites. I had a man do some weeding for me one day since I was left in charge, and he cleaned out one corner, taking everything ahead of him—cariganas, scarlet runners, and all—and although the weeds have returned the cariganas and scarlet runners seem to be considerably put out about it. But I played up to Mrs. Brophy's lead and said the summers were so lovely here, I could not bear to leave.

We spoke of the joy of being able to have our dresses hanging tidily on their own hangers in their own clothes closets, instead of being squeezed in a valise; we said how we disliked packing and unpacking, and remembering to put in those rolls of tissue paper in the folds of the dresses, where they never do any good anyway; and catching trains, and studying time tables.

We did not wish to discourage our hostess now that she had her tickets and reservations, but we feared New York might be very hot in July, and no doubt she would sometimes really envy us back here, enjoying the delightfully cool and crisp nights.

We spoke of the evils of the tipping system, and roughly estimated what we were going to save by not exposing ourselves to it. And then

the irresistible shops in New York, planned and designed to make weak women spend! We pictured the return of our friend in September, with two buffalo nickels, two one-cent American stamps, theatre checks, and a New York car ticket in her purse, three valises full of wrinkled clothes, with probably a trace of face powder spilled on them; hollow-eyed from lack of sleep; ten pounds heavier from lack of exercise; a blurred memory of flying landscapes sliding past the car windows; her head light from constant motion . . . while we three would be slim from our temperate diet and regular exercises, the bloom of youth on our cheeks, the light of knowledge in our eyes.

For we had decided as we talked to be very intellectual, too, and agreed right there to go one day to our Museum and view the Dinosaurs and fossils of the Bad Lands, and acquaint ourselves with the historic documents we would find there. We could learn about Sir George Simpson, and why he crossed the Pass, and David Thompson, and know the truth of how our city got its name, the coyote its plaintive voice, and the dandelion its dauntless spirit.

And when our hearts crave beauty, we will take the elevator to the eleventh floor of the big hotel and have tea on the roof, looking away to the westward where the mountains stand all blue and silver and snow-crested. And we will think kindly and tenderly of poor Mrs. Burns, traversing the sunburnt pavements of New York, with a blister on her heel, and an ingrowing toe-nail.

And then, too, we will one day take the Ford and tie a few valises wrapped in gunny sacks on the running board, and drive boldly into the gate of the Sunshine Auto Camp, disregarding the gently-worded sign that local people must not crowd in, and fetch up beside one of the Community stoves, and there cook ourselves a meal, getting the local color and atmosphere and feel of camp life, and catching its neighborly spirit by borrowing a lemon squeezer from one neighbor, and the hot frying pan from another.

And another day we will cross the ocean by taking the Blue car to Third street east, and have a chop-suey dinner at Lovey's. A holiday at home has possibilities.

SECURITY

UNTIL to-day
I have embroidered many a dull grey hour
With shining bead and flashing crimson flower;
I've changed the drab of life to gold and blue
Thinking of all the glorious things I'll do
When fortune comes my way!
Until to-day
I loved to dream of days when I shall roam
Away from this old town I call my home;
Away from Friday sweeping and the clink
Of dirty dishes in a tea-stained sink:
I loved to dream of steamers plowing through
Tumultuous seas, white gulls against the blue;
Of oriental silks with crumpling sound,
With golden peacocks on a crimson ground,
Of temple bells: and flights of flashing birds,
And lots of things I cannot tell with words.

To-day
I set my dreams and dreaming all away:
I said farewell to every plunging wave,
I did not keep a thing: I could not save
One yard of silk; I let the peacocks go;
For in a flash I saw the future's map
And knew that life—for me—was
This
or
That

You know, of course, how keen we are on oil,
And fortunes have been made. Old Mrs. Doyle
Is off to Europe now on A. P. Con.
To-day it seemed I could hold back no more,
Here was sure fortune knocking at my door.
I sought the bank—and drew my little store:
I took the money crisp and new and green
And felt myself as happy as a queen;
Here in my hand I held the magic keys
Which might admit me to the Seven Seas—
The stiff new bills were like so many wings
To bear me to the palaces of kings;
My ears were full of sounds like drums afar—
Sweet, vibrant words like jade and samovar!

I found my way into the Oil Exchange
And there I found, nor did I think it strange
To see my neighbor; I've often heard her say
Where things are free, she cannot stay away.
"You've come to buy," she cried, "I knew you would!
I wish you luck—they say Macleod is good:
Oh don't I wish that I could take a fling!
If I could leave, I'd go and teach a year,
I know that I could save five hundred clear,
And that would make a fortune . . . .Hear me rave!
I get these spells . . . Alas! Alas! for me
There's nothing but a cold eternity
Of minding grandma. Say, she's eighty-three
And good for twenty more I do believe!
I'm in for life, I tell you—no reprieve.

Isn't old age the bunk?—I'll say it is.
And now what gets my goat is—Dan and Liz
Should take their turn, but do you think they will?
Oh no, they leave it all for Jim and Lill.
They send a little money now and then
And think, no doubt, that they have done a heap;
I wish they had to stand and hear her weep
And cry that no one cares for her at all.

"A dozen times a night I have to go . . .
It's months since I have had a full night's sleep:
And here's a thing that surely gets me wrong,
Mother had plenty once, but it's all gone.
Young Fred, the clever son, the Financier,
Who goes with Et, his stylish wife, each year
On buying trips to Europe—they were sure
They could take mother's modest little pile
And double it in no time. Fred, it seems, could not endure
To think of money lying in a vault where father left it
Earning five per cent.; when he, brave soul, could place it
Where it would just hump itself and swell . . .
It maddens me to think of it . . . oh, well
That's that . . . We never hear a word from them at all

Except we see some item in the press
When Ettie entertains, and once when she
Was going to the Coast to represent
Her Chapter at the gathering of her Club;
Mother had set her heart on seeing her,

For she is Freddie's wife—the favorite boy.
I wrote to her, inviting her to stay
Coming or going, but she passed us by.
She DID phone from the station, and she sent
A post card telling us the peaks were high
Or waters blue or something bright like that . . .
To think she would not come and she so near,
Has caused the poor old lady many a tear.
But here am I unloading all my woe
On you—Forgive me, won't you? I must go.
I hope you'll make a million."

This afternoon, I bought a bond,
A dull gray thing it is, at five per cent.
And in the Bank I found that I could rent
A dull gray box; 'Safety Deposit' is its name in full,
And in its cold embrace I laid my Bond,
Patting its head, with grateful hands and fond,
And twice a year I'll journey to this shrine
And clip the coupons; gloating, "These are mine,"
Adding to them whatever I can save,
And laying all together in the grave,
Speaking them soft and fair—"Good Bonds, to you
I trust the future—you will see me through,
Emancipating Bonds! You will set free
Me from my kindred and my kin from me!
O unforgetting Bonds! I know you will
Keep me from bothering my Jim and Lill."

I'll miss my dreams;—I know I'll never go
Where silver birds and purple peacocks grow,

But still!
There is
A strengthening of heart and soul
Thinking of Dan and Liz
Who might have had to send the little dole!
I know that whistling trains my soul may fret;
In days to come my pallid soul may grow
As weak as water, wishing I could go:
But when I feel the sting of old regret
I'll concentrate a little while
On Fred and Et!

ARE WE A GLOOMY PEOPLE?

I LIKE Lectures.

It is very pleasant to sit in a comfortable room and let your mind drift along with the speaker, and yet be able to leave him without apology or offence at any mental cross-road if a daisied meadow beckons or a meadow-lark calls.

I did this one afternoon not long ago. The lecturer, a very sedate young man, was talking about Canadian literature. He was rather pessimistic about it, and said we had not any real literature in Canada. I looked back at the mountains, which I could see from the window, and did not care whether we had or not. I knew we had something.

Then he said we were a gloomy people. We were so concerned about the material things of life that we had no time to play. Facing the stern conditions of existence, we had grown hard and unimaginative—

It was about there that I left him. I began to think about a summer's day, a languorous day in early August on the prairie when a blue gray haze veiled the hills and the grain stood motionless in the fields, green gold in the ripening sun. It was a day which made you hold your breath and pray that to-morrow might be as to-day and all the to-morrows until the grain was safely cut. I saw

again the little white-washed house and the flagged walk which ran between the nasturtium beds, and the blue delphiniums standing against the fence, and the sun-flowers turning their yellow faces with the sun.

There was a cloud in the west, a thick, dark gray plank-like cloud with an ominous edging of white and caverns of blue, in which lightning played, flashing in and out as if a door had been opened and shut. But not a sound, not a whisper, and on the trees not a leaf stirring. In the fields the sun still shone, but its brightness began to fade and sicken.

At four o'clock the storm broke. When it was over the grain lay broken and beaten into the ground. The leaves were stripped from the trees. The flowers were simply gone as if they had never been, and the garden was a litter off broken stalks, and then the sun, warm and brilliant, came out as if nothing had happened. A few straggling hens, draggled and bewildered, stepped out into the yard and cautiously picked at the hailstones that whitened the grass.

Then it was that the mother of the family, whose year's work had gone in the fateful twenty minutes, took command and sent the children out to gather hailstones.

"We'll make ice cream," she said cheerfully. "We may not taste it again for a year, for all the cream will have to be sold now. But to-day we have plenty. We may as well get something out of the storm. Cheer up now, children, and see who can find the biggest one and hurry before they melt.

"We'll call Jim's folks to come over. Aunt Minnie will be feeling pretty low. She was going to have a trip home, poor girl. Hail is not as bad as drought though, for there will still be cattle feed, and it's wonderful the way the straw will grow up. Beat up a cake, Lillie. There is plenty of bread. George, you phone while I set the freezer. I'm glad you thought to gather in so many of those flowers, Lillie. They do look nice. We can put them in the cellar every night and they will keep a long time. It is a lucky thing that none of our windows broke."

I went on pleasantly thinking of this woman. But I came back in time to hear the vote of thanks and the meeting closed happily with coffee and asparagus rolls.

On my way out I met one of the oldest women in the club. I asked her if she thought we were a gloomy people. "You should know," I said to her. "You have been here since before the railway, haven't you?"

"Yes," she laughed. "I came about the same time as the mountains. If we had been gloomy we would have died. We have lived on hope and optimism and the sure knowledge that next year would be a good one, and it usually was. We are always expecting something here, something pleasant and thrilling. With us it is the Day Before Christmas all the time. With that poor boy it is the Day After."

THE WAYS OF WOMEN

I HAD forgotten the smell of the Montfort house, but when Martha opened the door, it came back to me unchanged. That faintly acrid odor which betokens age and long occupation by the same people. I thought I could detect the odor of old silk dresses, with yellowed tissue paper in their folds; old pieces of embroidery put away in pasteboard boxes, whose labels bore the names of men long dead; the spicy smell of heavy Christmas bakings; the medicines and disinfectants of many recovered sicknesses; the flowers of weddings and funerals.

The twenty years had not changed Martha greatly, for having never been young, there was little the years could do to her. She was a tall woman with thick glasses and thin hair; yet with a certain dignity and charm of manner, which made her a favorite with all of us.

She was generally spoken of in her youth as "Poor Martha," because of her family cares—the four clamorous young brothers and two sisters, one or more of whom were always with her. I remembered having seen her without an encumbrance only on the occasions when she was wildly searching for a strayed one.

And poor Martha was destined to a lifetime of slavery, for when the boys grew up and the two

girls were married and the day of freedom was about to dawn, her mother had a stroke and dramatically resigned herself to a life of invalidism. So once again Martha found herself sold down the river.

She received me gladly, and led the way to her mother's room, where enthroned in a four-poster mahogany bed, regal in her purple gown and lace cap, the old lady was waiting for me.

"I knew you had come," she said, holding out a shapely soft hand. "My friends are very kind to me since I was laid aside. Martha, we will have tea now.

"Yes, we are very comfortable, Martha and I, in the old house. It is a big house for two lone women, and Martha had some notion of having it altered, so another family might have the upstairs, but I stood firm against that. I could not endure strangers in my house, tramping over my head when I was trying to sleep. And besides, what would my sons say if they knew their mother was renting part of her house? Martha seems to be strangely deficient in pride. I mean proper pride of birth and station . . . .

"And I have been quite grieved with her over this matter of her sewing for strangers. I am sure her brothers would forbid her, if they knew it, but she begged me not to tell them, and I decided to humor her. She pleaded with me that she could not sit idle, and of course she only sews for our own circle of friends. Even so, it is very hard on me; what with telephoning and people

coming, it becomes quite irritating. I can only stand so much.

"Martha grows a little difficult as she gets older," went on the old lady, with a heavy sigh. "She wants to join a sort of literary club here."

I ventured the opinion that no doubt she would enjoy it. I remembered Martha's love of literature, and her prowess in reciting every word of Canto Five of the Lady of The Lake.

Mrs. Montfort shook her head.

"It is a very mixed affair. Anyone can belong. One of the teachers here started it, rather a common sort of person, who came here without invitation and discussed the matter with Martha in the hall . . . . It was through this woman she met this Evans person . . . I suppose you have heard about the trouble I have had with him?"

I had heard that Joe Evans, who had made a fortune in Alberta oil, had come back to the old town, and proposed to Martha, and had been scornfully rejected, not by Martha, but by her mother.

I dared the old lady's wrath by saying a word of commendation for Joe.

"He is an utterly impossible person," she said scathingly. "His father was a pedlar. You remember him, do you not? And with all the cheek of that type, he came here to my bedside and argued with me. He said, 'You won't live forever, Mrs. Montfort, and Martha will find it lonesome, if she has no one of her own.'

"I said, 'She has her brothers, sir, and two married sisters . . . But all this is unpleasant.

I did not intend to mention it. I want to tell you about my sons. They are doing wonderfully well. Charles is a barrister in New York. He is married, and has a charming wife. Sometimes we get a newspaper clipping where their names are mentioned. Such a gay life they seem to have! He says it takes all he earns. The dear lad always loved to have good things, and yet with it all he is so generous! Every Mother's Day he sends me the most beautiful wire!"

Martha had brought in the tea-tray and had swung the table over the bed, so her mother could pour the tea.

"Martha, do get that wire Charles sent. It was so beautiful! He wanted us to visit them last winter. But of course that was impossible. I wrote back that I thought Martha and I were best at home."

I looked at Martha, and thought I saw a flicker of something in her quiet face.

"You are surely a lucky woman to have Martha with you," I said. "She is the sort of daughter we read of."

"Martha is a good girl," said her mother. "I have no complaints. She is just like her father, quiet and reserved. She never could make friends like the other girls and boys . . . Allen is president of some great club in Toronto. I forget its name. Anyway, he went to the Coast last year, to their Convention, and the train— they had their own—stayed an hour here, and he spent it all with me.

"There were speeches in the park, but he said,

'No. I will spend the time with Mother.' I have wonderful sons. Such a comfort they are to me! And when Allen went home, he sent me a beautiful book of views of the Convention, and it had several pictures where I could find him . . . Did you get the wire, Martha? Maybe I have it here . . . I had it yesterday. Yes, here it is in the book I was reading. See, it is a Mother's Day wire and written. I like it so much better than a typed one."

I took it from her and read aloud the tender words of affection.

"Charles never forgets," she said with a break in her voice. Martha hurriedly left the room.

Looking again at the wire, I noticed it had no number.

"Sometimes I think Martha is a little jealous of the boys," said her mother in a low voice.

I came away, marvelling anew at the ways of women.

WE ARE ALL THE SAME

IT was Sunday evening, at the Penguin. In the big square front room, the men were letting the time go by unchallenged. There was no good reason for trying to hold it. A radio in one corner raised the question of "Who was Cain's Wife?" which was, no doubt, a vital matter to Cain in his day, but drew scant attention from the Penguin listeners. They let it pass with the patient lethargy which comes from being out of work, when life itself resolves into one great problem. And for the moment that one was not pressing. They all had shelter; they had eaten; there was nothing to say.

Outside the rain poured drearily, and the wind as it swept across the railway tracks drew a shudder from the loose window frames.

The men regarded the rain with a sort of joyless satisfaction. As long as it rained they were safe. Mrs. Bruce, who sat behind the desk going over her day-book, would turn no one out in the rain, hard woman though she was; and the rain obligingly continued to stroke the windows with its streaming fingers.

Mrs. Bruce looked up when I rang the bell on the counter, and motioned for me to come into the small enclosure called the office. From her high stool she had a view of the whole premises:

the big room; the kitchen beyond, and the cubicles at the right, where stood the "beds" referred to in the big sign outside.

It was in regard to the beds that I had called, having sent a couple of needy pilgrims here a week ago for lodging. Mrs. Bruce gave me the reckoning and told me, too, something of the vicissitudes of her life.

"I've been here for ten years," she said, "and if I could collect what's coming to me, I'd do well. But you can't take the breeks off a Highlandman. I've been counting up my losses to-night. It's a bad night, and I might as well know the worst."

Just then the front door opened and an old man came in, in a gust of wind. He closed the door behind him smartly, and took off his streaming rain coat and hung it on a holder behind the door, carefully adjusting the shoulders. He was a tall, spare old man, with a closely cropped beard, red nose, but an unmistakable air.

"A night of rain," said he, musically intoning the words. "A night of wind and rain!"

There was a murmur of assent from the men.

"A night to make one grateful for a roof over one's head; a roof and," here he turned and bowed gracefully though somewhat stiffly to Mrs. Bruce, "a gracious landlady."

He moved toward the stairs. "I have dined, thank you," he said to Mrs. Bruce, though she had not spoken. "Later I will come down for a cup of tea—if I may."

He went up the narrow stairs.

"He's an auld buddy who came in with the un-

employed last winter," Mrs. Bruce explained in a low tone. "A nice auld buddy, and such a gentleman! He was an actor and dancing master at home, but—"

Mrs Bruce drank from an imaginary bottle, and sighed significantly.

"He's been here nearly a year now . . . Our ways are rough by his, but he makes no complaint . . . And the way he teaches my Evelyn —she's seventeen now and works in the laundry. He won't let us say 'Evelyn' like we did—he says it's 'Eevelyn', like that . . . And he won't let her chew gum or roll her stockin's, or sing the Bum song, or use a slang word. And the way he gets her to eat her vittles would do your heart good. There's none of this talkin' with your mouth full, or reachin's out for stuff. He has his meals with us mostly, and my word, but we do catch it . . .

"My two boys—they're men now; Evelyn is the youngest—they have been out of work, too, all winter, and been eatin' here. They are at me to get him out, but I tell them I have fed people all my life, who did not pay me, nor even thank me. And he does more than thank me—he tries to help me.

"One night, when a big cowboy I had kept a week came in roarin' drunk, I told him to get out. If he had money to buy booze he had money to pay me. And he flew in a rage and swore at me. Mr. Bimber stood up for me, I can tell you—I never heard anything like it. He towered above the cowboy and, says he: 'Would you bite the hand that has fed you?' with his voice sweepin' this

room like a trumpet. 'Would you dare to be rude to this elect lady, to whom we all owe so much?'

"It made me feel all queer and solemn to hear anyone stand up for me like that . . . I am a hard woman, I know. Runnin' a roomin' house is no job for a soft woman—but I guess maybe I am a little soft that way, for I do like a word of praise and a little notice took of me.

"And if I go out, he sits here in his velvet coat, and answers the phone like the King of England. And one night, not so long ago, a wet, cold night worse than this, he had the kettle on, and made a cup of tea for me, when I came in.

"I ain't been used to much; my man was a good, hard worker, but he was no hand for the like of that. Maybe it's because I never had much done for me that it goes over so big. I sure do like to be took a little notice of, and I don't deny it."

I told her we were all the same. We all like to be "took notice of." It is a trait not confined to women who keep boarding houses. It is not even confined to one sex!

HOW IT FEELS TO BE A DEFEATED CANDIDATE

FROM the angle of human interest defeat is more attractive than victory inasmuch as it is a more common experience, and the average reader may be described as a mind imbued with considerable fortitude, when contemplating the sorrows and disappointments of some one else.

Successful candidates are not given much scope in their speeches. They run in a pretty even groove. Borne down the street by the cheering throng which halted before the *Herald* building, with cries of "Speech! speech!" the successful candidate, carried aloft on the shoulders of his friends, addressed the surging sea of faces: "This is the proudest moment of my life . . . a man would be a dull clod who did not thrill . . . It will be my daily task to represent . . . this far-flung Dominion . . . your children's children . . . till death us do part!"

Not much to that!

But the story of how people receive the news of disaster admits of great variety. Do they rage, or weep? Do they bluff it off with a jest? Or do they call high heaven to witness? According to the latest picture version, the great man comes home early on election day, and there, in the seclusion of his own home, surrounded by a few

trusted friends, calm, dignified, unmoved, mouth tight-lipped, head unbowed, face pale, but lighted by a valiant cheerfulness, he awaits the end!

And at a late hour, when all hope is dead, with the adverse majority steadily mounting like a metre of a taxi-cab wedged in the traffic, and wires of condolence beginning to arrive, carried thither by gray-uniformed boys in stiff caps, growing suddenly tired of it all, the great man bids his friends an affectionate good night, and goes heavily up the broad stairs, the light from the upper newel post falling full on his noble face, and showing the lines of care—and the friends below disperse quietly, murmuring something about one of whom the world was not worthy.

And so to bed!

We did not do it that way.

We all gathered in the committee rooms, which the night before had echoed with our laughter, our foolish boasts, and idle words, and before us on the wall a great blackboard bore the leering figures—that lurched and staggered before our eyes, changed every few minutes by one of the campaign managers. We were all frantically cheerful, but it was all about as merry as an empty bird-cage. With sickly smiles abounding, seen and unseen, we sang, "See him smiling," and "There's a Long, Long Trail," and speeches were made, and everyone did their best, but there is no denying the fact that there was an outcropping of gloom in the exercises of the evening. By ten o'clock we knew that one of our number was elected, one was defeated, and I was hovering be-

tween life and death. We knew that the counting would take all night, and some of the faithful ones were determined to see it through, but I was ready to call it a day about eleven o'clock, and leaving my political fate in the hands of the scrutineers, I came home, and slept until I heard the clip-clap of the milkman's horses, and the clinking of bottles on the back step, and through the open window I could see the crystal dawn leading in another day.

Then I remembered the unfinished business of the night before, but before consulting the telephone I looked out of the window for a while. It was so dewy green, and pleasant, and peaceful, with the shadows of the big trees making black lace medallions on the lawn.

The voice in the telephone was announcing the names of the elected candidates.

No! Mine was not among them. There were five elected. I stood sixth. Just for a moment I had a queer detached sensation, a bewildered, panicky feeling, and in that dizzy fragment of time, it came home to me that for all my philosophy and cheerful talk, I had never really believed I would be defeated—but now . . . now . . . the boat had actually sailed—without me.

But just like David in his grief, the mood quickly passed. Why should I go mourning all my days? My political hopes had died in the night! What of it? They were not the only hopes.

My family behaved admirably at breakfast, even the youngest one, who is at the age when it is rather embarrassing to have a mother of any

sort, and particularly so to have one that goes out and gets herself defeated.

Thinking of the many women who would be disappointed, and men, too, was the heaviest part of my regret. I know how hard many of them had worked. I told myself over and over again that I did not mind . . . I suppose it does not require much fortitude to accept a stone wall . . . Anyway, I made a fine show of cheerfulness.

But though I went about quite light-heartedly and gay, telling myself and others how fine it felt to be free, and of how glad I was that I could go back to my own work with a clear conscience, there must have been some root of bitterness in me, for I was seized with a desire to cook, and I wanted the kitchen all to myself.

No woman can be utterly cast down who has a nice, bright, blue and white kitchen facing the west, with a good gas range, and blue and white checked linoleum on the floor (even if it is beginning to wear on the highways and market roads), a cook book, oilcloth covered and dropsical with loose-leaf additions, and the few odd trifles needed to carry out the suggestions.

I set off at once on a perfect debauch of cooking. I grated cheese, stoned dates, blanched almonds, whipped cream, set jelly—and let the phone ring.

It could tear itself out by the roots for all I cared. I was in another world—the pleasant, land-locked, stormless haven of double boilers, jelly moulds, flour sifters, and other honest friends who make no promise they cannot carry through. The old stone sugar crock, with the

cracked and handleless cup in it, seemed glad to see me, and even the gem jars, with their typed labels, sitting in a prim row, welcomed me back and asked no questions. I patted their little flat heads, and admitted that the years had been long; reminded them, too, that I had seen a lot more wear and tear than they had. I loved the feel of the little white-handled knife with which I peeled apples for pies. It lay comfortably in my hand and gave me the right vibration.

I am ashamed to have to tell it. But I got more comfort that day out of my cooking orgy than I did from either my philosophy or religion. But I can see now, when the smoke of battle has cleared away, that I was the beneficiary of that great promise respecting the non-overflow of the rivers of sorrow. We often get blessings that we do not recognize at all, much less acknowledge. But God is not so insistent about having His gifts acknowledged as we are! So long as we get them!

No, there was no overflowing of sorrow. I think I could not have endured it if my biscuits had been heavy, or my date trifle tough, or the pie crust burnt in the bottom. Nothing failed me. And no woman can turn out an ovenful of flaky pies, crisply browned and spicily odorous, and not find peace for her troubled soul!

You've heard of the poet's heart leaping up when he beheld a rainbow in the sky! The same cardiac condition prevails when your salad dressing has that satiny texture, which is a cross between the skin of an egg and whipped cream!

The next day I wanted to get out. I craved

free life, and fresh air; open fields and open sky. I wanted to look away to the mountains, blue in the distance, with the ice-caps on their heads. So I went to Earl Grey golf course, and played all morning. It was a morning of sparkling sunshine, and I loved all the little blue bells and violets that spangled the fairways. The mountains stood by mistily blue, with some snow in their crevices, cool and unconcerned.

The game was not entirely successful. I was too conscious of the Elbow Park houses below me; some of them vaguely resentful; some overbearingly exultant; and others leering at me with their drawn blinds, like half closed conservative eyes. I tried to concentrate on the many good friends I have there, but someway the wires were crossed, the notes were jangled, and not a gleam of friendliness could I raise.

I got on better, and did some splendid driving by naming the balls, and was able by that means to give to one or two of them a pretty powerful poke.

I played each morning, and at the end of three days I saw that my spiritual health was restored —I was able then to dispassionately discuss the whole matter.

The confessional is psychologically sound, for whether it is a sin or a sorrow, or both, it is well to drag it out into the sunshine and let the healing winds blow over it. Ingrowing grief it is that festers and poisons.

So now I am able to bring down all the evidence. I believe, like Selina Peake's father, in "So Big,"

that every experience in life, pleasant or unpleasant, is so much velvet, if we know how to take it.

I believe that the way to take trouble is to leave it! I know there is in all of us, when things go wrong, a tendency to stick and stall, and explain, and amplify, and recall, and all that; and it is all worthless and unprofitable. There is no more devastating emotion than self-pity; it withers and sears the heart, dries up the fountain of youth, and is bad for the complexion! This is no coroner's inquest, no post-mortem on "How did it happen?"

I know how it happened that I was defeated. Not enough people wanted to have me elected! So there is no mystery about it—nothing that needs explanation.

But just why I thought I would be elected is a human interest story. I believe every candidate, who ran, believed in his own success. Hope springs eternal, and friends see to it that it does. Prior to election day, friends fairly bubble with enthusiasm. They haven't a doubt or a fear in the world! They tell you the enemy concedes your election! The bets are all on you! I remember, though I did not think of it until after the election, that when a certain man ran for mayor in Edmonton some years ago, he had more names on his nomination papers than votes on election day!

Then there were the departing friends who earnestly desired to do their country one good turn before they left for their holidays. They came to see me. The first one said: "My dear, you simply

must let your name go before the convention. We need you in the House. And after your five years of experience! You simply must not think of dropping out! What chance?—Oh, my de-ar! Everyone says you will head the polls. The baker spoke to me about you this morning. It seems his wife was in your Bible class in Manitoba. He's so sorry he's an American citizen, and so neither of them can vote, but they'll work for you."

I was greatly touched by her enthusiasm. I thought she must be a type of many. So she was. I met them everywhere. They sought me out, and entreated me to step out and save my country, and then having nobly performed their duty as citizens, one by one they sought the solace of the cool, sweet far distant places, where birds voices call, and waters idly lap the shore.

But they didn't forget me! On election day, they sent me picture postcards, and in fairness I must add that at least three of them came back to vote for me.

Looking back on it now I see I went through the campaign with a sort of courageous imbecility! So many people told me I was sure to be elected, I seemed to forget that I had deep-seated, relentless antagonism from several sections of the community. Naturally, my opponents did not report to me, and I reasoned, apparently, from insufficient data. But, a few friends full of enthusiasm can create quite an impression. Mine appeared like an army with banners. I should have remembered that there was nothing remarkable,

or significant, about this. Every one has some friends. The blackboards in front of the filling stations carried a wise word the other day. They said:

"Even cotton stockings have their supporters!"

I might have known that the liquor interests do not forgive the people who oppose them. Temperance people will forget their friends and cheerfully forgive their enemies at election time, but the liquor people are more dependable. Some of them spoke to me about my stand on prohibition, and told me quite frankly that if I would put the soft pedal on the liquor question they would vote for me.

And I didn't. And they didn't! And there are no hard feelings between us.

One grand old exponent of the cup that cheers and inebriates told me, with odorous conviction, that he was with me against the hard stuff, but a glass of beer never hurt any one! And then he told me sweetly reminiscent tales of his dear old sainted grandfather and other godly and rotund gentlemen of the old school who drank heavily and regularly—and died in the hope of a glorious resurrection.

But far more bitter and unyielding was the opposition of the conservative element (my own party is not entirely free from it), that resents the invasion of women. Public offices, particularly those that carry emoluments, they believe to belong, by the ancient right of possession, to men. They are quite willing to let women work on boards, or committees, or indeed anywhere if the

work is done gratuitously—but if there is a salary, they know at once that women are not fitted by nature for that! And God never intended them to be exposed to the dangers and temptations incident to such a post!

The dangers and temptations incident to office-cleaning at night, which is done by women, and the lonely homeward walk in the early morning when there are no cars running, is not so bad, for the work is sufficiently ill-paid to keep it quite womanly.

And the curious part of this is that women can be found who will support this view. Not many—and not thinking women, just a few who bitterly resent having any woman go farther than they are ever likely to go.

Another feature, which works against any woman who runs for public office, is the subconscious antagonism of men who don't want to work with women. Men are subconsciously afraid of women! Afraid they will not play fair! No individual man is to blame—it is a racial trait, and will take a lot of working out. Men will work their fingers to the bone for women—but not with them.

And then, of course, opposing me were many wives! No one should criticize the wives! And I won't! I saw many of them on election day. One told me quite sweetly—"I don't know anything about this, but Charley is frightfully keen, and told me to give out these cards, and say 'I hope you will vote our ticket'—It's all a beastly muddle to me—and bores me to tears!"

I thought of Mrs. Pankhurst and her heroic followers going to jail, and suffering the agonies of social ostracism, as well as physical cruelty, to win for women like these the right to vote, and with a less worthy emotion I thought of some of the efforts we had made here. I was like the young chap of five who denounced his one-year-old sister when she displeased him, in these scathing words: "I am sorry I ever prayed for you!"

Oh, well!

Life has compensation for all of us. When one door shuts—another opens.

Basil King told us once, that the day he met with the accident that made it impossible to carry on his work as a clergyman, he bought a typewriter. I didn't need to buy one. All mine needed was a new ribbon.

UNTIMELY TEARS

THE cool church, with its open door, offered a pleasant harbor from the billows of heat. I stepped inside thankfully, for my appointment with the minister was still twenty minutes away. I had come to persuade him, if I could, to come and lecture to us in our small town.

People began to come in noiselessly and I noticed the altar was banked with flowers and ferns and the organ was playing softly through the gloom and when the lights were suddenly switched on I saw I was at a wedding. The groom and his attendant came out of the vestry and waited before the altar.

And what a charming wedding it was!

Flowers and ferns; roses and trailing smilax; silver bells and streamers; three bridesmaids in mauve, jade, and peach; a queenly bride in shimmering white; a little flower-girl about the size of a spool of thread carrying a basket of roses; "O Promise Me" before the ceremony; "The Voice that breathed o'er Eden" afterwards; the responses audible and clear; not a hitch; not one awkward or embarrassed moment; everything proceeding with that studied smoothness which comes with careful rehearsing. The ring did not fall. The glove rolled back.

It comforted me—that wedding—it was such a

perfect performance. It comforted me by reminding me that, in spite of hot winds, and dust-storms and short crops, Beauty still walked the highways of our lives.

The last word was spoken. The last prayer said. Then in that brief pause so packed with emotion something happened. Something harsh and horrible. Upon that musical silence broke a cry! And the sound of a woman sobbing.

"O my poor boy!" she wailed; "my poor Freddie!"

There was a commotion around her and then she was led out still sobbing. My heart ached for the stricken group at the altar who stood shocked and dumb. Then the friends gathered around them and I saw no more. But I knew that the beautiful wedding so carefully planned and so faultlessly carried out had been broken into a thousand fragments and my heart was hot with indignation.

The minister told me about it afterwards.

"Yes," he said in answer to my question, "it was the groom's mother. She is a fine woman too but she has no sense of fitness. No one would deny a woman a few tears on the occasion of her boy's marriage, but she might have had them shed before she came, and she might well have chosen a more secluded place than a crowded church. There is the attic, the basement, the garage or the kitchen sink, all available—and her tears did not mean a thing—she likes the bride and well she might. She is glad to have her boy married and settled. She will see him

every day and she is not the clinging vine sort of woman at all . . . It was hard on the bride, and a cruel thing for her to do . . ."

> "To everything there is a season—
> There is a time to weep
> And a time to laugh,
> A time to break down
> And a time to build up."

I have often wondered about that mother-in-law. I hope the bride did not have to live with her. I know exactly what she would be like. She is the sort of person who would be sure to want a hot bath on Monday morning and would use up all the hot water. She would suddenly be seized with the ambition to re-pot the big fern just after the sunroom had been cleaned. She would press some one to stay for dinner when the family were going to eat up the remains of the head-cheese and the pot-roast. She would gasoline her gloves and boil cabbage the day her daughter-in-law was entertaining. She would notice that her son's suit needed pressing and comment on it at the moment he was dashing out of the house to catch the car. She would be sure to think of something bright and interesting to say at that critical time when you are about to hear the name of the new station on the radio.

We all know the type. A good woman but with no sense of fitness.

TOO LATE FOR HER

THERE were about four hundred of them, well-dressed, alert, and capable looking women. They drive their own cars, play a good hand at bridge, belong to study clubs, have breakfast in bed when they feel like it, have ideas on art and politics and are not afraid to express them.

They were watching a demonstration given by a softly-spoken young person in pale green, who had without haste or waste prepared a five-course luncheon in our presence. It was cooking in a pale green stove enhanced with nickle trimmings. A pale green refrigerator, gleaming like a block of jade, had received the dessert, and in its arctic recesses the cream was now chilling, the jelly was setting, and the forty-two ice cubes were forming. While these miracles were being performed, the young person told us why biscuits were sometimes tough; why cakes fell and why housewives failed and men left home.

It was a happy scene, modern and sophisticated, typical of the emancipated women whose problems have been solved. But I could not keep my mind on the stage nor listen to the young person in green, though I had the greatest admiration for her masterly handling of her subject. I was so busy thinking of another woman for whom all these wonders had come too late.

I was back forty years in a prairie farm house, a new one, smelling of lumber, making a call on a city girl who had come to our neighborhood, a bride, six months before. I had heard she was not very happy. She stood looking out of the window, drooping and sad and so thin I wondered how she managed to keep her clothes on.

The noon dishes were still on the table; the fire was out and it was getting close to supper time, and even I knew that this surely boded ill for the housekeeper.

She began to talk to me. "Look at that," she said to me, pointing out of the window.

I looked and saw nothing.

"It is the wind," she said listlessly. "See how it threshes the trees and tears at the clothes on the line and whips up the straw in the yard and all for no good. Doing no good to anyone. Over there," pointing to the river bank, "there is water running away, barrels of it, running away, but when I want water I have to carry it from the well and draw it up with that horrible creaking, croaking windlass. Millions of gallons of water but none for me.

"And last night. Did you hear it?" she asked dully. "The thunder and lightning, tearing and roaring and shaking the house. Enough light to light the house for a week but gone in a second and everything blacker than before. It burned our haystack, though. Now look at that fire—black out. It will not burn for me. Do you think I could borrow a bit of lightning to light my fire?"

I had never heard talk like that before. And I never saw anything so tired and so hopeless. Her eyes had a festering look which I have never forgotten.

I put on the fire for her and helped her with the dishes. But I was glad to get away. She was so queer and talked in broken sentences.

She stayed a year. Then one day she was gone. And the judgment of the neighborhood went against her. When a woman left her man in those days, and a good hard-working fellow, too, there was only one explanation. She was a bad lot.

My heart was sore for her to-day when I saw the young woman in green, drawing water from a tap and getting heat or power or cold as she willed by turning a switch. My heart was sore for Jim Sneddon's wife and all other tired and defeated women whom electricity would have saved.

And I wondered about these young women so well dressed, so happy and assured. I wondered if they know how great has been their deliverance.

Perhaps it is only those of us who have had to let the butter and cream down into the well in a pail by a rope to keep cool; gather chips to coax a moody and reluctant fire into action; chase clothes up and down a washboard all day long; breathe into lamp chimneys and rub them with newspapers to make them shine; make butter with a dash churn; make a floor clean by elbow grease and iron clothes a la Mrs. Potts—

Perhaps we are the only women who can ever be sufficiently grateful for the blessings of modern science.

YOUNG ENOUGH TO KNOW BETTER

THE friendship between the two families had been such an ideal one that when the quarrel came, it was the talk of our neighborhood.

For three years the Cadmans and Taylors had lived side by side. They had taken out the fence to make the two lawns into one. Mrs. Cadman and Mrs. Taylor shopped together, entertained together, used the same clothes-pins on the same clothes-reel, borrowed patterns, co-operated in the matter of preserving kettle, vacuum cleaner, and lawn-mower, and went into conference at any hour of the day or night on such questions as the relative merit of binding and picot edging, granitewear and aluminum.

The men went into the city every morning on the 8:20 car, borrowed magazines and library books, went to baseball matches, and killed each other's vote on election day. The two little girls, aged ten, went to school together and exchanged sweaters, tams, bathing suits, and collected stamps and street car transfers.

But now the friendship that had been built up by three years of neighborliness lay shattered and dead, stabbed by a few fiery words.

The two little girls, swinging in the hammock (made by their mothers out of barrel staves and rope) had disputed over whose turn it was to be

swung, and Angela Cadman, convinced that it was time for Ruth Taylor to vacate, had hastened the process by upsetting the hammock, throwing Ruth to the ground. Ruth raised a loud cry of protest and fright, slightly tinged with pain. Mrs. Taylor came, Mrs. Cadman came, and a conversation ensued, in which everyone took part.

When Mrs. Taylor, mother of Ruth, called Angela Cadman "an ill-mannered, selfish, spoiled child," Mrs. Cadman replied haughtily and retired with dignity.

But her heart was heavy when, an hour later, she saw Mrs. Taylor and Ruth leaving the house, apparently going down town, and noticed that Mrs. Taylor was not carrying the blue purse she had given her on her birthday.

When Mr. Cadman came home, she told him about the quarrel, but Reg. Cadman unfortunately took the offensive.

"I told you there would be a smash some day. You two have been too intimate. You couldn't buy seed for the bird without asking her advice, and I'll bet you let her away with all she said about Angela."

"Well, you needn't jump down my throat," Mrs. Cadman snapped back. "You've said worse than that about Angela. It's not so very long since you whipped her for losing your golf balls and then found Glen Taylor had borrowed them."

"Now what has that to do with it? Say, you have the greatest memory for mean things!"

"You're very inconsiderate," Mrs. Cadman cried, her voice shaking. "You know I'm upset,

for it's no fun to quarrel with one's best friend. But no matter what happens, I am always wrong!"

"Oh, don't get so dramatic, Ethel. You make me tired! You and Rose Taylor have nothing to worry about. You don't know you are alive."

The home atmosphere became heated. The next morning Reg. Cadman took an earlier car. He hoped to avoid travelling with his friend, Glen Taylor, but curiously enough Glen Taylor had, for reasons of his own, left home early too. They met with restraint and discussed unimportant matters. At lunch time, instead of eating together at the Rosebud, as usual, they each decided to go elsewhere, and met again with still greater embarrassment.

Sitting alone, Reg. Cadman ate his combination salad, and rehearsed a conversation he intended to hold with Glen Taylor in the near future.

"Do you mean to say that because your wife and my wife had a silly row over the kids, you are trying to avoid me? Don't you think you can let your wife fight her own battles? I certainly can . . . You know very well your wife is quick-tempered. You've said so . . . You don't need to distress yourself . . . I am not forcing myself on you."

The next day the quarrel reached the second stage. Presents were returned with notes.

Mrs Taylor wrote: "I should think we might have settled our quarrel without involving our husbands, but evidently Reg. thinks he has to snub Glen. So let this be the end." The blue

purse, a sofa cushion, and a picture, all neatly wrapped, came with this.

Mrs. Cadman assembled the cups and saucers, one hand-painted scarf, and a copy of "Adventures In Friendship" and wrote: "I can only follow your lead. This quarrel is of your making, not mine."

A week went by, a thoroughly miserable week. Invitations to teas were received and refused. The usual Saturday afternoon picnic was not ever mentioned, and now it was Saturday again, a bright day of blue sky and white clouds, that invited all house-dwellers to come out and be glad. But in the two small houses with the common lawn, two women were shedding bitter tears.

In the offending hammock, Angela and Ruth sat and talked. Their friendship had not been disturbed, though in deference to their parents they had walked apart until out of sight of their homes, as they went to school.

"When I get married," said Ruth Taylor, "I'll live beside you, and I'll have four children, and so will you. One child is too much trouble. And if one of your girls upsets one of my girls out of the hammock, and she raises a howl, I won't even come out. I'll say, 'Clementina'—that will be her name—'will have to learn to take her bumps.' "

"Your little girl won't be a howler," said Angela generously. "That sort of thing always skips a generation. And mine won't be rough like me . . ."

"Oh, you're not rough, Angela. At least, I don't care if you are!"

"The worst thing about grown-up people," Ruth

went on after a pause, "is that you can't tell them anything. Their feelings get hurt so easily!"

Angela swung the hammock. "I am glad we have no feelings," she said. "So when we quarrel, we can make it up in a minute. I couldn't stay mad for a week. I'd be sure to forget."

Ethel Cadman's phone rang, and a voice came over the wire, a repentant voice, limp and faded as a washed ribbon.

"Ethel, it's Rose. I've been listening to Ruth and Angela. They're swinging in the hammock. . . . They have more sense than we have. I'm sorry, Ethel. Can I come over?"

POLL 47

POLL 47 was in the basement of a school, a damp, cold place, smelling mousily of cement, lime, and sewage, and reached by a dark and winding passage. But we, stout suffragettes that we were (stout-hearted, I mean) did not mind this. Was it not for the privilege of going to the polls that we had been working all these years? And two of us had been appointed as scrutineers for Poll 47. And, better still, was not our own Mrs. Banks one of the candidates?

A north window drained in a little gray light, revealing the ballot boxes on the table, the voters' lists, the booths in the corner screened off by cotton frames behind which a citizen could be alone with his conscience.

At exactly nine o'clock came the first voter, old Tom Benchley, the town drunkard, whose wife supported him by doing the washing in many homes.

Mr. Benchley regarded us with a disapproving and rheumy eye.

"Where are the scrutineers?" he asked sternly. "Every poll should open at nine."

"We are the scrutineers," we answered politely. "And this poll opened one minute ago."

"Are there no men to do this?" Mr. Benchley queried with reproof in every syllable. "This is no work for women."

"Women have done harder work than this," we said sweetly. "It is a cold and unpleasant place, we know, but our work is easier than doing washing, and washings, as you may have heard, are often done in basements too."

"I believe in women stayin' at home," he said pointedly. "And I don't see what good they can do in the Legislature either. I'd like to see my wife at this!"

"And no doubt she would find it a pleasant change, too," we agreed. "For we can sit at our work, and that is much easier than bending over a tub."

Mr. Benchley pondered that for a moment and then like a man who suddenly remembers that time is passing, he said, impatiently, "Give me my ballot and let me out of this."

We found his name on the voters' list, stroked it out, gave him a ballot, and directed him to the seclusion of the polling booth.

"A bad beginning," said Mrs. Locke to me under her breath. Mrs. Locke is Scotch and superstitious. "He'll not vote for Mrs. Banks. You know it was Mrs. Banks who got his wife to interdict him. I suppose that's why he's here so early—to get in a vote against her. He can't hear us—he's deaf. I had my heart set on polling the first vote, and now this old sinner has got in ahead of me. 'Who spills the foremost foeman's life, his party conquers in the strife.' Old Tom, as our first vote—when we are trying to elect a woman—is a bad omen."

"Listen," I interrupted her.

A sound of a scratching pencil came to us from behind the screen, and a great joy broke over us.

"He is writing," we signalled to each other across the table in wicked glee. "He is spoiling his ballot. Hurrah!"

We banished all traces of mirth from our faces and were rigid and business-like when he returned. We showed him where to put his ballot and noticed that he had begun to roll it and then folded it. But we let that pass without comment, for we were glad to know that we would be able to identify his ballot. We were curious to know just what he had written.

Mrs. Locke's cheerfulness returned.

"We may win after all," she said, as she hunted up her own name on the list. "No wonder he is scornful of women, having been supported by one for so many years, the lazy old villain!"

"And did you notice her name is not on the voters' list at all? That means the little shack is in his name. She is paying for it, but he owns it. Poor little soul, she would have voted for Mrs. Banks quick enough! But he wouldn't. Never mind, he has spoiled his ballot anyway."

When the polls were closed that night and the ballot boxes opened, we were watching eagerly for that rolled and folded ballot. When we had smoothed it out we found five words there, written in a large and trembling alcoholic hand; five words that had not only spoiled his ballot, but which seriously upset our opinion of him, so free-

ly expressed. Thomas Benchley had written on his ballot: "I am for the lady."

We looked at each other rather sheepishly.

We had been so sure!

THIRTY YEARS

IT was her great hour of deliverance; waited for and planned for thirty years, but somehow, in this dewy June morning, with the train whistling for the water tank one mile away—the train that would carry her away from her life of bondage—the glamor had gone out of it all. The shackles struck from her wrists had taken all her strength with them; she told herself bitterly that she was like a stupid little canary, who, finding the door of its cage open, has not the sense to come out.

But she was going. Nothing could stop her now. The radiance and exaltation would come. All her thoughts and hopes had been directed to this great day when she could tell Joel Branson she was leaving him forever. She had served her sentence and was free. Thirty years is a long time, and a hard punishment, but a woman has to pay for her matrimonial mistakes. Well, she had paid. In humiliation, and hard labor, and a thousand little meannesses. She had expiated her sin, if sin it was for a girl of nineteen to marry the man she loved, blinding her eyes to his faults.

She had intended to tell him she was leaving, just as soon as Mary's letter came, telling her the suite was all ready for her.

Mary and Caroline, her two daughters, were

both on the city teaching staff now, and able to give her a home. They knew what a life she had led, and ever since they were little things had comforted her with plans of their independence . . . But some way she had not told him—another proof that the years had weakened her.

She had merely said she wanted to go and see the girls, and to her surprise he consented, and had carried her valise to the station.

"Give my love to the girls," he called through the window as the train moved out. Joel Branson was a proud man in his way, sensitive to public opinion, and had always carefully timed his ragings. It would hurt his pride when it became known his wife had left him; walked out without asking anything for her thirty years . . .

The girls had taken a suite overlooking the park, and from the window of her room she could see beds of geraniums and white daisies. Her room was done in mauve and gray, with a light over her bed and a pile of books on the table. On her stand were creams, powders, and perfume.

She looked at it all through a blur of tears. She, who had endured everything with her head up, her eyes dry, was now a poor, broken, trembling woman, unbelievably old and worn. Had all this beauty and peace and comfort come too late?

"And now, mother," said Mary, "you can attend all the lectures you want. There's one every night, I think, over there in the Library, and you can go and come as you please, and we know just how much you have to catch up. So don't think

you have to cook, or sew for us. You've done all that, and now, you must have your fling."

That night in the rose and mauve room, she slept fitfully. The noises of the city were strange and terrifying. The street cars clanged, train whistles blew, and once the fire-engine roared by, throwing her into a panic of fear . . .At daybreak, she awakened with a scream, and the girls came flying into her room.

"I had a bad dream," she said. "I thought I saw your father lying on the floor of the granary. He had fallen through the trap . . . I am sorry I frightened you."

She lay looking at the sunlight rising on the wall of her room, going over the events of the previous day. Suddenly she sat up, tense with fright as a horrible thought gripped her.

She had forgotten to fasten the trap door of the granary when she put some of the things in the loft for safe keeping! That, then, was the meaning of her dream! It was a warning!

She couldn't tell the girls. She knew what they would say. But she must warn Joel. If she could only phone him, but Joel would not have a phone. He said she would waste too much time, talking to her neighbors . . . She told herself there was not a chance in the world he would be in the loft. It was only in haying time that he might be there, and the hay would not be ready for two weeks. She would write him, but he might not go to the post office . . . In her dream, she had heard him call her name.

She got up and went to the window, determined

to get control of herself. Joel would be glad if he knew she was suffering because of him. He had always begrudged her any pleasure. And now, on her great day, had come this blight. Oh, why had she been so careless! she would phone the Smiths to go over and tell him . . . No, that would not do. It would be heard all over the party line. It would be different if she were going back.

There was only one thing to do. Go back and fasten the trap.

It was daylight now, but too early for the girls. She would read. But the words ran together meaninglessly. She watched the milkman's white wagons, and thought with a stab of loneliness of her two cows coming to the bars . . .

That day, the girls would be gone until evening. There was luncheon at noon at the hotel. She wouldn't need to tell them. The train went at nine and came back at four.

She walked from the station, and was glad to meet no one. She knew she had a distraught look. Her heart was pounding in her ears.

The house stared at her strangely, and there did not seem to be a living thing about the place. She noticed with horror that the upstairs door of the granary was open.

"Joel! Joel!" she cried in agony. "Oh, Joel!" She climbed up the ladder, still calling.

Joel, sweeping the loft, turned to see his wife's face, white with fear, at the door.

He dropped his broom, and came to her.

"Oh, Joel," she cried. "I forgot to fasten the

trap and I dreamed you fell, and I came back to tell you . . . It might have happened . . .!"

"Why, Mary!" he said. "You poor old girl! I came through the trap, and just opened the big door to get light. There, there, Mary—it's all right! Nothing happened . . . only say, maybe I'm not glad to get you back! This place is like a graveyard without you. It's a year since you left, Mary!"

THE PSYCHOLOGIST

I AM fortunate in having a friend, who has studied psychology. She can talk about frustrations and inhibitions and Mendel's Laws, as casually as you and I speak of brussells sprouts. In the club, to which she belongs, they read life histories at a glance; no old sin or old secret is safe.

I was with her on the train one day and she decided to give me a demonstration.

"Do you see that woman across the aisle, two seats down?" she asked me in that low voice that betokens mystery.

The woman two seats down was easy to see. She was a big woman, dressed in a flowered silk dress, and at the moment was standing on the seat disposing of several bulky parcels in the rack.

"What do you read of her history?"

I did the best I could, at short notice.

"She is a fine, motherly type," I said, "and has done shopping for the neighborhood as well as her own numerous family. She is too good-natured to refuse. She is bringing home samples of madras muslins, appliques and wall papers, and has learned to make paper candy-baskets and lamp-shades. She is advanced enough to have bobbed her hair, but she still wears a skirt. She is not

concerned about diet, can cook a good meal, and eat it. She has a light hand with cakes, and at the Ladies' Aid Social prefers to look after the dish-washing. That's about all I can give in the first five minutes," I said.

Mrs. Evans regarded me with something like pity.

"You have not touched on any of the deeper things," she said. "You have made an entirely superficial reading."

"It's your turn now," I said.

"I will think out loud so you will follow my method," said she. "Do you notice anything peculiar about her umbrella for example?"

I didn't. It looked like the $1.98 kind, which is set out in company with one hundred others, on the first floor, when it rains, and which I have bought and lost many times.

"It has a dog's head on the handle," said Mrs. Evans. "She has a bowl of gold fish in one of those parcels; a love of animals is thereby revealed. She is a woman, who keeps pets, and why does she keep pets?"

"Because she can't help herself, quite likely," I ventured. "I had seven cats once, because I couldn't give them away as fast as Clarissa had them."

"Oh, don't you see a deeper reason? This woman is starved– starved!"

"She bears it well."

"Her soul is thwarted, so she pours out her affection on animals. She seeks a substitute."

"I can give her two kittens and not stint myself," I said generously.

"She would be much happier, if she adopted a family," said Mrs. Evans. "She cannot satisfy her heart with anything less."

"Let us speak to her about it, then. What's the good knowing these things if we keep it to ourselves?"

Just then the object of our solicitude came down the aisle. In a few moments she returned, and as she passed I caught her eye.

"I was just into the baggage car to see my pup," she said. "I got a ginger spitz while I was in the city."

Mrs. Evans beamed. We all like collateral evidence.

"Sit down and tell us about him." I made room for her.

"I am interested in dogs, too."

"I thought if I got a pup, he would not draw the enmity of the cats," she said. "I have four cats, and there may be more when I get home, but we hadn't a dog. We have a parrot, too, who calls me every morning. Just as the clock strikes seven he begins 'Mother, Oh mother!' and he does not stop until I shout at him that I am coming."

"He calls you 'Mother'?" Mrs. Evans said. She was confident now. "Isn't that sweet. Did you teach him that? I am sure you like to hear him."

"Well, not always. Sometimes when I am sleepy, I wish he were not quite so regular in his hour of waking. But it is fun to hear him call the children. He begins with the eldest boy who

is in High School now, and goes on down the list until he gets to the twins, and he calls them together 'Jack and Jim, Jack and Jim'. He calls in order of their ages—the whole eight."

I did not look at Mrs. Evans.

THE RAINBOW

A PICTURE hung on the kitchen wall, a picture of Niagara Falls, seen through a rainbow; a colored picture, showing the glassy-green river coming toward me, serene, swift, and unafraid, changing into foaming white spray that leaped and billowed, now higher, now lower, obeying some rhythm of its own.

This was before the time of moving pictures, but it was a moving picture to me, and many a time when I stood before it, walloping a churn full of cream with the old-fashioned dasher, I could hear the thunder of that flood of water on the rocks below, and feel the cool spray on my face. I made up my mind then, I would see the Falls.

It was a sunny day when I saw it. The air was full of spring odors, with apple and plum trees bending under their load of pink snow; the woods full of dog-violets and trilliums. Young lambs teetered on their too-long legs in the meadows, and the fresh air coming in the train windows had a resinous tang that lowered the content of oranges, perfume, and moth-balls which had come with us from the city. The poplar trees swung rosy garlands as we passed, as if in compliment to the brides and grooms. And we had many of them.

We reached the Falls in the late afternoon, and hurried over, as if we feared it might be gone. It was smaller than I had thought, but the glassy-green water broke into spray, just as it should; and the *Maid of the Mist* rode at anchor on the river below. I had a tight feeling around my heart. It was all so familiar, and yet so strange, like the old home with strangers living in it.

Brides and grooms were everywhere, shrill with excitement, and they were not looking at the Falls at all. I had pictured them as standing awed in the presence, transfixed and hushed. They told other brides and grooms incidents of their weddings, and how cleverly they fooled the gang at the station, rescued their valises, shook off the rice, caught the train at Sunnyside—

Two women sat in front of the Falls, crocheting as they discussed another woman, the new daughter-in-law of one of them. I soon discovered they did not like her or her family—the whole connection, it seemed. They were all extravagant, two-faced, bad-tempered, and not very honest, though both ladies declared they were not going to say one word against them.

Their hands flew as their tongues clacked, and as they counted the purls and single and double chains, their heads went up and down like hens picking corn.

I stayed a little while and then came away, sorrowful. Something had deflowered my romance.

But I had lived with it too long to let it go like that. I would not give it up, and in the early

morning I went back and had it all to myself.

Then came an old man with a lunch pail; a night watchman going home.

"I like to come and see her," he said, "before I turn in. She is so sure of herself, and keeps on rolling. Just as the Indians saw her a thousand years ago. Nothing stops her. She's on her way. People come and go. She rolls. Sometimes I think I'd like to go with her. But I know life is like that. Just rolls too, and I'm part of it. Makes me feel better when I watch her. I see nothing matters . . . . much."

Just then the sun came over the tree tops behind us, and fell on the glistening spray, and I saw the rainbow!

THE WOMAN WHO MISSED HER OWN PARTY

ANY one who has picked wild strawberries will know how I felt when I saw my hostess opening a jar of them for me that day, when I stopped at the Eagle's Nest Service Station. The wife of the man who ran the Station had come down the path from her little house, and asked me to come up and wait while the repairs were being made. She spread a white cloth over the oil-cloth covered table, and hospitably told me to "sit in."

"Do you serve wild strawberries and home-made biscuits to all wayfarers who have car-trouble?" I asked.

"No, not always; I really haven't loosened up on the strawberries since I had a bit of a disappointment. I have never told any one about it, for it hurt me so. I couldn't even tell Bert, for he had warned me that it would turn out just as it did."

"Tell me," I said; "I am a deep well."

She hesitated a moment.

"It is about a year ago," she began; "a woman came here, with her car, and I asked her to come in. You see it is lonely here, so far off the highway, and I am glad when women come. I asked her to have a cup of tea, and I had strawberries too, and fresh bread. She said, like you, that wild strawberries are a test of friendship . . .

We had a wonderful time. She was easy to talk to, easy to listen to, and I think I told her more about myself than I ever told any one. When she was leaving she asked me to come and see her in the city, giving me her card. She said, 'I have a big house, and two maids spoiling for something to do. Write me a card and we'll have a visit.' She seemed to mean it."

"Of course she meant it," I said heartily.

"Now wait," said the lady of Eagle's Nest, "I am not so sure. I didn't intend to go. It did not seem reasonable that she should want me. Of what interest could I be to her? I, who live on a mountain trail, the wife of a service station man; I, who see only life through train windows going by, longing to follow it, but longing in vain—a sunburnt, calloused-handed woman, who knows no greater thrill than when the conductor throws me a roll of magazines—over which I sit until Number Four roars by reminding me that to-morrow morning has come. Well, anyway she asked me —and I fell for it . . . I wanted to go. Bert said it was just her politeness, and that rather hurt me too. So one day when the rains had closed in on us, and no one came on the trail, I sent her a card and said I was coming in and would spend the afternoon with her if she were at home. I wrote the letter three times trying to be very casual and offhand and travelled. I tried to give the impression I was just running down to the city to match a gold-fish—or have my glasses straightened, or my hair marcelled, or a diamond set. I didn't want it to sound like my

biennial outing. I brushed my clothes and blackened my shoes, and washed my face in buttermilk to remove one of the three coats of tan."

"Tan is good this year," I ventured.

"Well, maybe—but it didn't do me any good. I found her house easily, and was awed with its magnificence; marvelling too, at my own assurance. I walked in between the stone pillars, and made my way to the front door. Just then two cars swept in, and beautifully dressed women—it seemed like a dozen—alighted, like butterflies glowing with color, glittering bead bags, fluttering draperies, gold shoes. I veered off, and went around to the back door. I was sure then she had not received my letter. She was evidently having a party. I couldn't break in on that. But I might see her a moment. I wanted to see her.

"At the back door, I knocked, and a tall woman came—a sort of warden-on-the-wall type, and she disposed of me in a moment.

"I am sorry," she said in a clipped English voice; "Mrs. Garrick is very busy—she is entertaining and can see no one. Will you come again?"

"It is of no importance," I said just as stiff as she, and came away. I sat in the station feeling very small and sad until Number Four came in, and got home at one in the morning. My visit was over. I had been to town, as we say."

I interrupted her there.

"Was that a bright windy day in the spring about a year ago?" I asked.

"It was—I remember the way the ladies' dresses billowed."

I stood up in my excitement.

"Mrs. Garrick was expecting a woman from the country. She had hurriedly invited a few of us to meet her. It was you. She said she met a charming woman at a service-station. There were about ten of us there to meet you—and you didn't come. I remember it well."

She looked at me in a dazed way. Then her face flooded with color.

"It was your party," I said. "Oh, why didn't you come right in? It was your party."

She opened her mouth to speak, but no words came. Then . . .

"Oh, did I miss my own party? I, who would have loved it so! Think of it—I sat there in the station, ready to cry with disappointment, while my own party was going on—and that dear woman!"

"Don't take it so hard," I said at last. "You are not the only one. There are many people who miss their own party, day after day, and never discover their mistake."

CATS

(No reference to Lady-friends, Political Opponents, Critics, or even Editors)

I MEAN real cats, the furry ones who lie before the fire or sit in windows and brighten the world with their cosy pleasant ways. I like them because they are so composed and self-sufficient and entirely right in their own eyes; so sure of themselves and the justice of their cause that they never need to repent and are never sorry for anything they have ever done; never want to tell you their troubles and never have any desire to do better. I like them but I have no illusions about them. I like best of all the common cats, the alley breed, who think a family tree is the thing you run up when the airedale is in pursuit!

About five years ago a little cat just came to us. She walked in with the calm assurance of a paid-in-advance roomer. She was a square-jawed, blunt little cat without one distinguishing feature except her air of confidence. She came in at the front door and walked through to the kitchen and I gathered from her air of self-possession that the Billeting Committee or the Employment Bureau or some other authoritative body had given her our address and asked her to call; and just for a moment I wondered if I had

put in a requisition somewhere for a cat. To relieve the embarrassment of the moment, which, however, was all on my side, I offered her a saucer of milk, which she accepted graciously and without haste; and then came and sat on my knee and gave me a careful scrutiny which ended in her jocosely biting my hand and I knew then that all was settled and she considered that my application had been accepted.

When the youngest member of my family came in and found us getting acquainted, he took one look at my impromptu visitor and cried out—quite offensively, we thought — "Wormwood Scrubs!"

Now I do not think that he intended to insinuate that my friendly visitor had lately occupied a cell in this or any other punitive institution, or that she seemed to be in any danger of so doing. It was rather his way of expressing surprise and, I fear, disapproval.

I have said she was a blunt little cat, a plain little cat of no particular color; last year's stubble or ravelled binding twine would perhaps best describe her complexion, but I could feel that she had a personality.

Unfortunately the name "Wormwood Scrubs" persisted, shortened to the "Worm" or "Scrubs," both offensive and damaging to her prospects; and so I saw that, to save my ingratiating young friend from the unfair burden of a mean name, I would have to give her one, so, looking at her square jaw, and uncompromising profile, I could think of just one name for her. It was plain,

business-like, tidy, descriptive, and not inharmonious; and so I made the proclamation to all-whom-it-might-concern, that the little cat should henceforth be known by the name of "Annie Gray," and as Annie Gray she ran her little race.

Annie had one of the qualifications of greatness. She believed in herself and she believed in her mission. Her mission was mice. I did not know that we had a mouse in the house; but the first morning after her arrival Annie produced a mouse, dead to be sure, but unmistakably a mouse. Her detractors declared that this mouse had been brought by Annie and planted in the basement for the purpose of convincing us that we needed a cat. Indeed, the young cynic offered to prove that Annie had used it before; but I closed the debate right there and upheld Miss Gray in her enterprise and praised her industry. The next morning Miss Gray had another mouse to show for the night's gleaning; and she carried it in triumph to the door of the young cynic's bedroom as if she would silence his clacking tongue once and for all.

Her reputation then as a mouser was assured and invitations began to come in from outside points; and Annie and I were both well pleased and flattered.

Telephone conversations ensued: "Mrs. McClung, I hear you have a wonderful cat and I wonder if you would let me have her for a few days; I have so many mice." (Paragraph of description followed—tracks every morning; wax eaten off jelly jars; oatmeal ruined; pantry be-

ginning to smell.) "I hear your cat is very clever . . . I will take good care of her . . ."

And so Annie began her career! All went well for several weeks and Miss Gray came and went in a covered basket to the homes of the rich and the great; and, once, at the very zenith of her popularity, had a taxi sent for her. When she had a few days at home she sat and washed herself with great care. It was in one of these breathing spells that we found her using the drip from an imperfectly closed tap for this purpose; and that was added to Annie's well-established record for intelligence.

I might have known better than to let her out on Friday the Thirteenth. The invitation came from a friend of one of Annie's clients, a Mrs. Belloe, of whom I had heard. I knew she belonged to some strange religious sect and believed in spirits; but I did not think that a plain matter of mousing would be affected by doctrinal divergence. Mrs. Belloe had one little girl, Alvaretto, aged seven, who had always been allowed to express herself in positive ways. It appears that, when little Alvaretto expresses her individuality by cutting her mother's best tablecloth with the scissors, she is not reproved in the crude and thoughtless way that some of us have used with our innocent offspring on like occasions. No, indeed! Little Alvaretto is told about the culture of flax and the weaving of linen, and is shown pictures of the processes involved; and then shown the severed threads and told that they can never be the same again, never, never, never; and is

taught a pretty little song with appropriate motions; so it happens that whenever little Alvaretto wants her mother's undivided attention she hacks a piece of furniture or breaks a dish or drags a sharp nail over the piano.

When Miss Gray was left standing at the top of the basement stairs waiting for someone to open the door for her to descend to the good hunting below, little Alvaretto approached her. Alvaretto had not seen a cat before and was naturally curious; so, following the plan which had been so successful with other objects of interest, she reached for that part of Miss Gray's anatomy which seemed best adapted to a quick jerk, and was in turn surprised to find two sharp teeth in her own fat little hand. This sudden come-back caused Alvaretto to cry loudly, and her mother, arriving in great alarm, forgot all her theories of gentleness and beat her invited guest with the broom handle.

Annie was on the doorstep the next morning with as mad a look in her face as I ever saw; and I knew all was not well even before I received Mrs. Belloe's account of the affair, from which it appeared that my Annie had made a brutal and unprovoked attack upon her innocent and defenceless child. This was in the morning and by night Mrs. Belloe believed that the cat was mad, and I had to admit she did not look any too well pleased when she came home.

After that the business of the A. Gray Mouse Exterminator Company fell off considerably, for the story of the wounding of little Alvaretto Bel-

loe had spread; and it was in this penumbral period of Annie's life that her deadly rival, Clarissa, appeared.

But I wish to make it clear that I did not part with Annie because she put a tooth or two into the soft little hand of Alvaretto Belloe, for I believe she was entirely taken by surprise, and acted under the impulse of self-protection; but when a little friend of mine who had been very ill came to see me the first day she was able to go out and brought to me her favorite kitten, I could not boorishly refuse so gracious a gift. The kitten was round, fat, and furry, a smoky gray marked with dreamy blue! Exquisite white markings, large luminous eyes, and an affectionate disposition. I do not wish to dwell on Miss Gray's behaviour at this time. "One of us will die" gleamed in her yellow eyes; and, knowing Annie as we did, we knew this was no idle threat. And Clarissa had merely hung for one brief moment on her wagging tail.

Now it happened, fortunately, that a friend of ours who owns a seed-house had sent out a call for cats, for mice were devouring his stores, sacks and all. The moment I heard that cats were wanted I phoned to him offering Annie delivered carriage free with the good-will of the former owner; and my offer was accepted then and there. I took her down that day and my last glimpse of the capable Miss Gray, as she disappeared into the gloomy labyrinth of bags and bins, was of a small sturdy, self-sufficient cat

about the size and color of a quarter's worth of rice, who asked for no favors and expected none.

Then for three months Clarissa reigned in perfect peace and amity; and the whole family rejoiced over her She was so beautiful; so playful and affectionate; the perfect pet. Three months of comfort, and then began a new phase of life for all of us. At the end of that time a family of four arrived; and no one was more surprised than Clarissa. We kept them all and found homes for them, too; and felt that a good piece of work had been done for this great new needy country.

In another four months she had five rather scrubby looking little things. There were mutterings of the advisability of drowning some of them, but no one wanted to do it, of course, and when they opened their round eyes no one could do it; so they grew in beauty side by side. Again we sent out to find homes for them. Clarissa was so sweet and trusting and left it all to us, especially to me; and I felt that I must not fail her.

With great difficulty I placed four and we kept the fifth. We did not need two cats; but what could we do? The kitten was jet black and had a glossy coat; and we believed there was a streak of Persian in it. We also believed—but more of this anon.

In an incredibly short time we saw that the blow was about to fall again; and it found us somewhat panicky. Some of the kittens that had gone out in the first distribution had yielded an increase and the owners had asked me quite pointedly if I would help to find homes for them.

The housing question sat heavily on me, and I found myself appraising all the people I met from this angle; would they or would they not take a kitten? When I was asked to speak for societies, I made it a condition of acceptance that two kittens would have to be absorbed by the society. I conveyed the thought tactfully, of course, but that is what it amounted to; and, during the season for meetings, I managed to dispose of several. At teas, and other places where women meet, I cleverly worked the conversation around to the subject of pets for children, and had touching tales to tell of the delinquent child who never had a pet; buttressing my tales with statistics to prove my contention; and, under the spell of these conversations, managed to shove off a few more.

But I went through some very dark days. Orders were cancelled, and kittens were returned. I am not sure that I did not get some back that were not Clarissa's at all. I grieve to have to say it but some of the people whom I had trusted failed me utterly; and they were so sly about it. If I went out of town for a day, someone was sure to bring back a kitten; and the reasons they gave lacked sincerity.

"The dear little pet seemed to miss its mother so." "Mother brought me a bird for my birthday." "We are thinking of moving into a suite."

Then there were the people who were clever enough to see me coming: "O Mrs. McClung, we would love to have one of your very lovely kittens but you know the people next door have an airedale and they are so hard on cats; and I am

so terribly attached to any pet that it would simply kill me to lose my kitty if I had one . . ."

Meanwhile Clarissa went merrily on. Our backyard swarmed with her courtiers; and, many a time when I was awakened by their unholy uproar, I thought wistfully of little Annie Gray, with her flat-heeled homeliness, and cursed Clarissa's fatal beauty which seemed to be in a fair way to ruin both of us, for I knew I was becoming a social outcast. People were afraid to be friendly with me for fear I would talk them into taking a cat; and I could see I was being deliberately left out of many of the pleasant gatherings.

Then followed a series of happenings which decided me on a certain course of action.

I had borne a lot from Clarissa. She had that meekness that can get what it likes out of people; but I was not so well pleased with her attitude toward the little cat we called the "Jeopard" (so named because he was so often found in jeopardy). The Jeopard had been given away and, not liking his place, came back; at least, he got back as far as the car line, where I found him standing between the rails calling loudly for some good Christian to show him the way home. The car was coming, and the little thing's eyes were wild with terror when I got him and carried him home in triumph; and, in my joy at rescuing him, I declared that he could stay, no matter how many kittens came. Clarissa promptly disowned him and fought with him, though he had not been more than a week away. When we at last persuaded her that he was her own kitten she fell on him,

not with any show of affection but with the fiery zeal of the good housekeeper, to lick his hair into shape; for the Jeopard was part Persian and dated back to the time the big gray Persian from across the street had broken his caste. Clarissa did not allow the poor Jeopard a moment of peace, but spent most of her time trying to make his hair lie down; and, when she found it could not be done, turned on him in a rage that was most unbecoming and unreasonable, for after all it was not the Jeopard's fault that his hair was long. Clarissa's conduct in this matter did much to shake my faith in her.

A blow fell on me from another quarter too. The big kitten, the one we kept from the second family, the glossy-haired jet black Angus of languorous habits called in good faith "Angus," became the subject of suspicion. I hoped I was mistaken; but I have found in matters of this kind one is never mistaken. The worst is always true. And it was six. We called his name Angus still but we added "in error," and tried hard to use the feminine pronoun.

When Clarissa again presented to an overstocked and unfriendly world a brood of seven I was desperate. I knew that society at large, I mean the section of society to which I had access, had reached the saturation point. I could no longer be the bridge between the catless home and the homeless cat. We could perhaps find some other place of living for our family and leave the house to Clarissa and Angusinerror. One other dark road lay ahead of me . . . there was one

way of escape and, driven into a corner as I was, I would take it.

I do not know why I chose Sunday morning unless it was that, in the lowness of my mind as I contemplated what I was about to do, a little sin like Sabbath-breaking was nothing to me. I remember how far away I felt from the sober respectable life which was ebbing past the house, as the well-dressed and orderly families took their way to church. The dewy morning air . . . Spring's elusive odors . . . the soft and inviting cadences of the chimes calling good people to prayer . . . the marching white clouds above my head . . . the stillness of the quiet streets . . . and I making my way to the back yard with a bottle of chloroform in one hand, and a covered basket full of sleeping kittens in the other.

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands in sleep; and, as the kindly drug spread its covering wings around the tiny travellers, I said to them, "Little cats, I'm sorry that you have to be deported; but you know about the quota. The quota is full and more full; and anyway, you need not feel disappointed for this is not much of a world for little cats. There are airedales and slingshots and bad little boys, and locked doors and horrible nights and hunger and burning thirsts and frozen ears, and hard-hearted women; and, in the good green country to which you are now setting sail, there will be none of these things. So be on your way, little cats, without regret. You are not missing much!"

But, when I came into the house and met the

bereaved mothers (whom I thought I had shut securely in the coal cellar) who regarded me with horror-stricken and anguished eyes, my fine philosophy fell away from me. Angusinerror went back to her one kitten, and as this was her first venture in maternity she grew to believe that she had never really had more than one; but Clarissa, who can count as well as any of us up to seven, spared me nothing and came with me the first time I went to the basement after that fatal Sunday morning and, grabbing her one kitten, the one I had, in my clemency, spared to her, she flew with it in her mouth to a high box in the store-room, and actually growled at me.

It was three weeks before she really made up with me and then it was in a cold, half-hearted way, and, when I tried a piece of paper on a string in the doorway, she chased it for me but I could see she was doing it to please me and not because she liked doing it.

There is a sadness of spirit about her now that is disquieting to me. She sits looking out of the window listlessly; and does not even growl when an airedale passes. She still hunts for the missing kittens and she stands in front of me quite often and plainly asks me to tell her where they are; and she wants to know why they come so easily? and why are they so sweet and lovely? and why is it so hard to give them up? and when I cannot answer any of these questions I know she thinks I am pretty dumb.

Mr. Kipling has written a song for all dumb beasts who are hard beset; and I say it over for

Clarissa, but she looks out of the window and I am not sure that it registers:

> Children of the Camp are we,
> Serving each in his degree;
> Children of the yoke and goad,
> Pack and harness, pad and load.
>
> And the men that walk beside,
> Dusty, silent, heavy-eyed,
> Cannot tell why we or they
> March and suffer, day by day.

But to-day the world is a bright and joyous place, for the buds are opening on the trees; and the tulips are sticking up their sharp little green noses; the river is running clear of ice; and just now a flock of wild geese have gone honking over the house; and so the old drama of life goes on.

THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

BEHIND the evening paper, in the last seat of the car, Eric Brown sat in premeditated isolation.

It had been a day of a thousand irritations and griefs, expected and unexpected. As Manager of an Insurance Company, he was the shock absorber —a three-way buffer between the Company, the Agent, and the Public. To-day the shocks came in from all six directions. There was the irate agent whose territory had been invaded; the policy-holder who claimed his brother-in-law had a better policy in another company; the sentimental, tearful woman, who would not let her husband take a policy—he might die; the sharp rebuke from the Company regarding the agents' accounts which were mounting higher and higher; the notice to vacate the premises in three months; a cashier's error that had to be explained.

He was tired explaining, coaxing, reasoning—tired of the sound of his own voice. Then at lunch time, when ordinarily he would have had an hour of peace, he had gone to his Service Club and listened to a wordy speech from a man who has an evil gift of saying undisputed things with great conviction, a sort of foamy eloquence that smothers the listener.

A thirty-minute ride on the street car, with

its clanging bells and people coming and going, was his first respite. At least he did not have to listen or answer. Passing a market garden he looked enviously at the workmen setting out cabbage plants in the brown earth. It was quiet there and the ground did not talk back. He tried to forget the unpleasant happenings of the afternoon, especially that last interview when he had unfortunately lost his temper. He wished now that he had left his office an hour earlier.

"I'm getting to be a mean old grouch," he said.

His wife met him at the door. "Oh, Eric, you're late. Did you forget this is the night we are going to the Armstrongs? Mrs. Armstrong said to tell you she is depending on you to be the critic. All the men are to make after-dinner speeches, and you are to criticize them and she wants you to go right after them and be real funny and make all the local hits. She says she is depending on you to make the party go!"

Eric sat down in the nearest chair and stared at her stupidly. "I won't go," he said. "I never said I would go. I wouldn't go if I had said so. I'm sick of people's crazy chatter."

Erma's pretty face turned pale. "Why, Eric, what is the matter?"

"I'm tired, that's all. Isn't that enough? Haven't I a right to be tired? I'm not a piece of machinery. I have a big job and you should help me. You shouldn't drag me out like this. You have no mercy on me!"

"I thought you liked going out," she said with-

out raising her voice. "You were pleased when I told you about this invitation. Even though you are tired, it will do you good to meet people. I was tired too, but I took a rest at five o'clock. You should have come home a bit earlier, but I suppose you forgot."

"Well, I won't go. Now get that. You like this sort of thing and I don't. Don't get me into this kind of corner again."

"Oh, don't worry, Eric, people who break engagements at the last minute are not long bothered with invitations. Come on then and I will get you something to eat. I have the kettle boiling. I thought we would have a cup of tea before we went. You can call Mrs. Armstrong and tell her you are not going. Just tell her the truth. She'll understand. Old Bill Armstrong never goes anywhere with her. But have your supper first. I'll have time to dress."

"Will you go alone?" Eric asked, wondering.

"Oh, yes, I must go. I can't leave my hostess with two empty places. I know what it means and what a slap in the face it is to anyone to turn down an invitation that has been accepted."

"Well, then, you can tell her, Erma, just what a terrible day I have had. I simply couldn't stand another session with people—voices bore into my brain like corkscrews."

Erma was slicing the cold ham. "Sorry, Eric, but you will have to make your own excuses. That's one thing I won't do. My mother did the excusing for the whole family, poor dear, and I always felt it was a bit too thick. You see, Eric,

we've only been married six weeks, and we haven't quite made our adjustments. But we'll learn. No! You'll have to square your own account."

After Eric had eaten a good meal of cold ham and potato salad, with a piece of apple pie and cheese, he felt greatly refreshed.

"I could have left the office an hour earlier," he thought. "I certainly did no good by staying and I did accept Mrs. Armstrong's invitation. Erma has been decent about this too, for I know she is disappointed. Surely I'm not going to grow into a narrow-minded money-grubber like old Bill Armstrong!"

Upstairs he could hear Erma stepping lightly as she dressed. She came down radiant in her dinner gown. "Sorry you are not coming, Eric," she said cheerfully. "Mrs. Armstrong will be disappointed. Have you phoned?"

Eric jumped up hurriedly. "I'm feeling better . . . What time is it, Erma? Are the studs in my shirt?"

"Yes. I laid out all your things. I'm still hoping."

"Well, I'll go," he said; "but, Erma, don't accept any more invitations for me. You know I don't enjoy this sort of thing."

Five hours later.

"You were wonderful, Eric," said Erma, the faithful and admiring wife. "I never saw Mrs. Armstrong so pleased over anything. That story you told about the explosion and the man and his wife going out of the house together for the first

time in twenty years certainly made a hit. How do you think of those things at the right moment?"

"I'm glad I was able to put the party on its feet," he said. "We certainly had a pleasant evening. I don't know when I laughed so much. But, Erma, another time don't give me anything to eat before we go to a place like that."

YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE IT WILL END

DAVID EVANS, aged seven, did not need to listen to the argument between his parents. He had heard it all before. His father was disappointed in him because he would not fight Michael Pepper, and his mother was making out as good a case for him as she could.

David wished to please them both but he did not like to fight. He wasn't afraid of being hurt, but he had seen Michael fighting Bill Dawson and their faces were ugly. He hated ugliness.

His parents' voices became louder. His father said, "You are spoiling him, Edith. You are making a sissy of him."

"What is a sissy, Daddy?" David interrupted at this point.

"A sissy is a boy who lets others impose on him and cries instead of fights," Dr. Evans explained, as he drew David to his side.

"But David doesn't cry," Mrs. Evans interposed.

"When Michael Pepper takes away your cart, what do you do?" Dr. Evans ignored his wife and looked at David, who hung his head with a feeling of guilt he could not understand.

"I come home and get my wagon, and then after supper I go back and get my cart," he explained.

"There, Edith, you see," David's father said; "he lets this Pepper kid take his things."

"He does, but he always gets them back, and he never comes to you or me to help him."

"He knows better than to come to me," the Doctor growled.

David's eyes opened very wide. "Wouldn't you help me Daddy?" he asked wonderingly.

Dr. Evans' lips set firmly. "I want to help you, David," he explained. "I am trying to help you. I want you to grow up to be a big fine man—strong and unafraid. Men have to fight sometimes."

"Do you fight, Daddy?" David showed his wonder. "Hit men—big men—when they take your things?"

"Of course I have to fight," Dr. Evans floundered a bit. "Life is a fight."

"Do you mean with Mamma?" David insisted.

"No, I mean with the world." The Doctor escaped to generalities. "But when Michael takes your cart I want you to get it—go right after it and bring it home."

"He's bigger than me," David said; considering the proposition.

"Never mind. Hit him, David. I'll be proud of you if you even try."

"I think David's plan is much wiser than yours," Mrs. Evans said with a flash in her eyes. "He uses his head instead of his fists, and when you let your temper loose you never know what will happen."

But Dr. Evans frowned as he rose to go to his office, and called back over his shoulder, "When

that Pepper kid sees he's not afraid he'll respect him."

It was three days later that young David Evans, aged seven, changed his methods of getting his things from Michael Pepper. Michael and Amy, his little sister, had come over to see a bird house David was making and to borrow David's cart. As they were going away David asked Michael to return the cart that day, but Michael told him he could come for it if he wanted it.

Suddenly David realized that now was the time to make his father proud of him. He walked over to Michael and said calmly, "I'll have to hit you, Michael, if you won't bring back my cart." So far in David's little mind there was no passion. He was merely trying a new theory.

But before he could do anything Michael Pepper doubled his fists, and hit him in the face, then another blow below the belt.

Amy Pepper began to cry. She knew what would happen to David if the boys fought. "I'll bring the cart," she screamed; "I'll bring the cart!"

But David didn't hear her. Something was happening to him. A rising rage possessed him. He was striking and kicking with all his strength. He wanted to hurt—to kill.

Michael sprang on him. They clinched and fell. Michael's fingers reached for his throat—pressed—hard—harder.

David's hand touched something heavy—closed over it—and with a mighty effort he jerked free.

Then in a blind rage he threw the hammer with which he had been working.

In the Doctor's office Amy Pepper lay with a purple bruise on her forehead. Her eyes were closed. As Dr. Evans worked over her, David stood with horror in his eyes asking, "Did I do it, Daddy? Did I kill Amy?"

His father did not answer until Amy opened her eyes.

KEEPING FRIENDS WITH THE FAMILY

SCIENTISTS tell us that our minds are like onions, with layers and layers of consciousness wrapped and folded around each other; and who am I to dispute them? It's a pleasant fancy with which to beguile our dull moments anyway, and very intriguing. Everyone loves to unroll a parcel that has manifold wrapping, which we strip off with rising expectancy—happy if its diminishing bulk contains something better than a raw potato at its heart.

Leaving the metaphysical aspect of it, we are on safer ground when we say that the relations of life begin with the family. We belong to many groups in these complex days: classes, societies, lodges, affiliations of all kinds—but the family is the abiding and inescapable one. We may resign from a Club, stay away from a class, change our politics, but the family into which we are born will ever remain our family. From it much of our joy and sorrow will come. It is, therefore, a proper subject for serious thought. What are we going to do about it?

The family half a century ago and less was bound together by the strongest ties of all. They worked together. They needed each other. They couldn't raise the barn, or gather the crop, without all the relations. Family feuds had to be patched

up at threshing time. But that's all over. Steam and gas and different methods of work have changed all of that. The economic bonds have fallen off the family. We are free from each other that way. Mother used to make the girls' dresses—now the girls watch the sales.

Instead of one enterprise in which every member of the family had a stake, we have the spectacle now of the members of a family going their several ways. The father carries on his grocery business alone; the son is an auto mechanic; the daughter, stenographer for an oil company. Even the mother, whom tradition has prescribed to the confines of the home, may be carrying on a nice little sales-on-commission business after hours. With all the devices for convenient cooking, all the semi-prepared foods on the market, no able-bodied woman need spend all her time and energy at home; the smallness of the modern family is also a factor.

And yet in spite of this seeming independence, we are dependent on our own people for our happiness, and always will be.

The first requisite in family life is a home, a common inheritance, something which requires care, something on which love can be bestowed. We love what we work for. A house of our own is a common denominator for the whole family.

And in a house there's work for every one, and that is the secret of family loyalty—community of effort. A house and a garden, wherein all have duties and rights, and the pride of ownership, is the foundation of family loyalties and

friendships. A family where everybody works is usually a happy family, rejoicing in the common inheritance. It is in this regard that a farm offers the best conditions for family life, that is, provided the human relations are harmonious.

Many books have been written on the theme of the stern, unyielding, autocratic father, and the rebellious son who leaves home, slamming the door behind him as he goes, while the pale, trembling mother weeps and prays but is powerless to effect a reconciliation. "You must obey your father," is the formula her sorely tried heart clings to. "You must not talk back to your father!" When, as near as the reader could judge, the old man needed to be talked back to, if ever a man did. But such was the tradition.

Years pass. And when the family fortunes are at low ebb, the proud old despot confined to his chair with gout (we know now he was simply poisoned with angry emotions), the poor mother worn thin and frail trying to please him, and with her tender heart breaking for her wayward boy; the pretty daughter, thin and pale now too, anaemic and sad, for she had to be in every night at nine so that father could get his rest, and never could she have any young people to foregather with her, "father was so difficult . . . ."

Into this sodden, gray, and stuffy family comes the Prodigal, browned by many suns, gay, rollicking, robust, successful, and forgiving. He claps the old man affectionately on the back, showers presents on everyone, kisses his weeping mother

and sister; pays off the mortgage; and a new life begins for the family.

To me the outstanding feature of this type of story is this:—the boy, who rebelled and escaped from the discordant vibrations, succeeded. He grew strong; lived happily, and developed a vibrant personality. The daughter, who submitted to the tyrant's rule, became a poor drab creature, the victim of halitosis. And though the writers of these tales had no thought of teaching such a heretical doctrine as this, it stands out from the story like the policeman at the crossing pointing an imperative white hand to the Far Country, and if the message of the hand could become vocal this is what it would be:

"If the vibrations of home are full of discord and you are unable to change them—it's down the road for you, my lad. Beat it, boy or girl, beat it! For life is a one-way road. Remember, you cannot double back and live again the days that are lost, and remember, too, that no one, not even a father or mother, has any license to darken the sun, or distort the moon and stars that were given to shine upon and lighten the path of youth. If you have tried every way you can think of to get along at home, and all have failed—try distance. Distance is a positive miracle worker in sweetening family relationships."

I am strong in the hope that the time is coming when parents will study certain psychological laws that control the conduct of their children; and it may be, in the providence of God, that the Church will lead the way. Instead of so much ex-

hortation from the pulpit, we may have classes in psychology where people may be shown how to overcome their troubles, instead of being constantly implored to endure them!

In Fanny Hurst's new book "A President is Born," she describes a middle-class American family in such vivid manner that the reader can actually smell, in its fascinating pages, the spice-cake made for the last birthday party, and the moth-balls that protected the old gentleman's winter coat. The Schuylers were a solid family in the sense of standing together. They fought with each other, shouted, scolded, upbraided, swore at and by each other, praised, laughed at, helped each other. The story begins with a family gathering; where the full force of the family assembled, and where the old gentleman, with many chuckles kept up his sleeve, until the friction of delay and suspense had set everyone on edge, the piece of news that shook the family to its foundations. These grown-up sons and daughters, with children of their own, were going to have a young brother or sister, a brother it proved to be, young David, destined to be a President of the United States.

Then the author traces bit by bit the influences which beat upon this square-faced, sturdy little American, following each stream to its source, with the alchemy of her great art.

One function gets the place of honor in the story, and that is the family conference. When the bachelor brother, the studious Henry, was offered the nomination to Congress, and refused

it, the family gathered to reason with him; when the golden-haired Claire and her cousin Stephen had together strayed too far from virtue's path, the family sat on their case, and decided after a stormy session on what could be done, and every member, young and old, attended. There was a feeble attempt to send young David to bed, which he staunchly resisted, upheld in that resistance by his old brother Henry who said, "Let the kid stay —don't make him think that having a baby is a disgraceful thing!"

So David grew with the strength of his family behind him—and learned all that they could teach him, thriving on the strong meat of the family conferences, where every member of the family, himself included, got a hearing.

And when disaster came to the family, every member stood bravely up to it, and met the shock like a square of Gordon Highlanders, knitted together, as they had been, by their sense of family unity. In telling the story of David Schuyler, Fanny Hurst has again demonstrated that the strength of the wolf is the pack.

Family unity is nurtured by freedom of speech, and by the same token it is shattered or rather choked to death by the iniquitous tradition, under which we have suffered for generations, that parents must not be talked back to by their children—that there is something God-like in the act of begetting a child, which forever establishes the parents, especially the father, in wisdom and honor. Happily this remnant of medieval superstition is passing away, and fathers and mothers

have to show cause, if they are going to receive reverence. Who are we,—we who have had the temerity to bring children into the world—that we are not to be criticized or questioned? Are we so perfect in conduct? So infallible in judgment? So irreproachable in character?

I do not mean that parents should endure rudeness from their children. Freedom of speech and rudeness are not even analogous. It is the boy and girl who dare not reply to their parents, who go out from their presence in thin-lipped silence, yet with bitterness in their hearts, ingrowing bitterness that cannot be expressed, and so swells and festers. If parents only knew the wells of bitterness they dig in the hearts of their children by their high-handed and austere dealings, they would welcome even rudeness in preference to that damning silence in whose poisonous breath filial affection withers and dies.

There is a passage in the writings of the Prophet Nahum in which God appeals to the Children of Israel to speak out. He cries, "Testify against me! Wherein have I wearied you?" That's the way to clear the air! Speak up. Give me your side of it. The meeting is now open for discussion.

Common courtesy is a great factor in holding families together. "No matter what goes wrong," a girl said to me once, "we can always depend on mother, her good manners never desert her. I am proud to say that my mother is the most courteous person I know." And that is surely a sweet

and gracious tribute for a mother to receive from her daughter.

Words, bitter stinging words, and even idle, gossipy words, without evil intention, disrupt more families than acts of disloyalty. The tongue is an unruly member, surely. And most of us have kept our friends largely because our idle words were not reported.

A woman, who had just moved into a new house, laughingly remarked to a friend, that any one who had as many relatives as she had, simply had to have a spare room. The remark was twisted a little when re-told, and by the time it had gone around the ramifications of the family, the whole clan was up in arms. The lady of the new house wondered why none of them came to visit her—and it took years to wipe out the ill-feeling. All of which bears out the words of the psalmist regarding the relation of strife and tale-bearers.

Family loyalties thrive, too, on pleasant surprises. No one can remember all the relatives' birthdays each year. But once in a while to spring a "three for five" birthday card which bears a blue and green bird, from whose beak a purple streamer shouts in gold letters a "Happy Birthday to Aunt Mary," helps a little, particularly if you manage to have it arrive in Aunt Mary's mail on the very day. Or to send to your Cousin Jim a newspaper clipping which tells of the new drought-resisting wheat, knowing that he, too, is carrying on an experiment, is a friendly little bit of good will propaganda that cements

family friendship. It is the small, unexpected courtesies of life that feed the tender plants of friendship, and it is in neglect of these that families so often fail.

There are proud and cynical souls who will flout all this, for to them it is a sorry business to even try to keep friends with the family, believing, as they profess to believe, that family ties are fetters to be broken.

There are shallow thinkers who write and speak much heresy and nonsense about the breaking up of a family group, and the desirability of each person living his own life, unshackled by traditions of family. Out of the mists and miseries of the past has the family group been evolved, and it will grow in strength and beauty as time goes on.

When the time comes, as it is surely coming, when no child comes into life unwelcomed and unwanted; when systems of State clinics and State hospitals spread their wholesome and healing gospel of good health for all; when mothers have time to enjoy and know their children, and time to study their growing minds; when the Church takes up the great problems of teaching people how to live with as much earnestness as it has tried to show them how to die, the family will be exalted and glorified.

Even now, though we are far from the ideal, let us remember, with deep affection and humble gratitude, that it is our own people who come to our rescue in time of distress, while the genial acquaintance, the winsome fellow club member,

the pleasant political associate, pass by on the other side, busy with their own concerns. The rather lightly-regarded relative is the one who is ready to become our security at the bank.

It was not the vivacious friend you met on the train, and for whom you gave a Luncheon-Bridge last winter, and who was, as the Society editor put it, "the raison d'être for many pleasant social events" after that, who offered to mind the baby for you when you had to go to the hospital. No, it was your sister Maude, who has six of her own, but gaily declared one more did not matter! So it goes!

It is in the dark hours of trouble that the family shines—which possibly was the thought in the mind of Solomon when he set down the statement that a brother is born for adversity.

FROSTED GRAPES

I SAW their battered caps going past the window and knew that the unemployed were again about to stand on my doorstep.

The phone was ringing; the mail had just come in; the breakfast dishes were in the sink; the flowers needed water. A woman was coming to see me about her matrimonial misadventures at ten o'clock; I was trying to prepare a speech. So I went to the back door determined to contribute to the unemployment situation the smallest amount of time.

"We don't want anything ourselves, but we have a friend who is in a bad way," said one of the men. "He's in a box car on the track."

"And what is the matter?" I asked.

"He's gone a little queer in the head, lady, and we're afraid to tell anyone for fear they'll shut him up, and he ain't a bit crazy; he had a big disappointment, that's all, and he's young. But he's no more crazy than—you are! If you could give us some coffee, and something kinda nice—he's fond of maple syrup—just to get him to eat. He hasn't tasted anything since it happened, and that's two days ago."

I wondered what emotional crisis had risen above the level of misery of his life.

While they were having a meal I got the story.

Jimmy had enlisted at sixteen, lying about his age to get in. His brother was killed beside him at Vimy, but he came through without a scratch, and after the war stayed in Eastern Canada. But he was unsettled and shaken, and did one thing after another, and when the hard times came had nothing saved. His two friends had lost their jobs, too, and the three of them decided to hike west.

"Jimmy wanted to get back to Glanville—he was sure he'd be jake if he could just get back there. He had met a swell lady there when he was going through with his battalion in seventeen. She was at the station with a big crowd, to see the boys go through, and she took to Jimmy. I guess he was a swell kid too, with his red cheeks and curly hair; and she said she wished he was hers, and kissed him as the train pulled out.

"Jimmy remembers everything about her. She had a hat with grapes, frosted over the purple, so natural you wanted to eat them. She was the mayor's wife, and showed Jimmy her house across the track, a big white one with a red roof and lilacs all in bloom, and she said to him: 'Jimmy, I will not forget you, even if the war lasts a hundred years.'

"And the band was playing, and the schoolchildren sang, and the ladies gave the soldiers boxes of candy and cigarettes, and the candy was something wonderful, with cherries in it. Jimmy was so young he had never smoked, and the lady who was giving out the cigarettes said: 'You're

too young to smoke, but I'll give you two boxes of candy,' and the mayor's wife said, 'Give him cigarettes, too. If he's old enough to fight, he's old enough to smoke,' and he did smoke when he got on the train, and it made him sick. He remembers everything, though that's thirteen years ago.

"He was sure we'd be jake if we could just get to her town, and we were nearly four weeks getting there, but we did get there at last, hungry, wet, and ragged, and sure enough, there was the big white house with the red roof and the lilacs all in bloom, facing the track just as Jimmy said. Jimmy was pretty near all in, but say, he was like a kid the night before Christmas.

"Every window in the house was alight, and Jimmy declared she must have known he was coming. We couldn't go in, looking like we did, so we crept round to the back, to the stable, and got in easy enough, and found lots of hay to lie on, and that was the best bed we'd had for weeks.

"Jimmy promised us pancakes and maple syrup for breakfast, and the three of us were kind of lightheaded, what with being so tired, and hungry, and happy too. Sometimes I had thought the poor kid was building too much on what she said, but that night, looking at the big house shining with lights, and all the swell cars parked around, I began to believe in it too, and seeing the people inside so good-looking and well dressed, it seemed maybe there would be jobs for us, and a new start . . .

"Jimmy fell asleep, telling us about the grapes on her hat.

"Then something happened.

"Someone was yelling at us. But we were so tired and thick-headed, we couldn't get it at all. A light was shining in my face, and when I got my eyes pulled open, I saw a policeman holding a lantern.

" 'Get up, you bums,' he shouted. 'You can't sleep here. This is private property . . . Get up and get out of this, or I'll have to arrest you.'

"I knew there was something I should say, but I couldn't think what it was.

"At last Jimmy got roused, and he said: 'Say, officer, listen! I know the mayor's wife. She's a friend of mine. Just go and tell her Jimmy Waldron is here. Jimmy Waldron of the 66th—the boy she said she wouldn't forget if the war lasted a hundred years. Tell her that.'

"The policeman kinda softened at that, and I could see he believed Jimmy too, and he left us and went into the house. The party was breaking up, and there was lots of cars getting started, and lights flashed in the stable door as the cars circled out.

"The policeman came back with something in his hand.

"Mrs. Tarrick says you can't sleep in the stable. She's afraid you'll smoke and set it on fire. But she says to go down to the Chinaman's—he'll still be open, and get a meal. And here's a dollar for you. She's sorry, but she can't remember any Jimmy Waldron. She says maybe you're think-

ing of some one else. She's a swell lady, the mayor's wife, and sure has fed a lot of tramps!'

"The light of the lantern fell right on Jimmy's face, and I thought he was going to faint, but he stood up and said, 'Thank you, officer, and will you thank Mrs. Tarrick. Tell her it was my mistake . . . I should have known there is no Santa Claus.'

"And he laughed, a strangling sort of laugh that was worse than any cry I ever heard . . . And he hasn't been just right ever since, lady. He's just queer."

MY RELIGION

EVERYONE is religious, I believe—incurably religious. We cannot escape it. We must be interested in our destination as we travel through life, facing the inevitable exit where the darkness will close around us. Our terrestrial tenure is so terribly insecure. We are all shipwrecked sailors on the deck of a listing vessel. How can we dare to say we are not interested?

Religion is an explanation, an emotion, and a code of ethics.

My first experience with death came when I was ten years old. One of our neighbors had died. She was a pale, draggled woman, worn out by hard work and child-bearing, and doing without the things her heart craved. She did not exactly die—she just quit! What was the use of going on? There was nothing ahead of her. So she dropped out of the race, acknowledging defeat. Nobody blamed her. I had heard the whole matter discussed, and I did not see how God could square Himself over the way Mrs. Inglis had been treated. My mother said she pitied the minister who was coming to preach her funeral sermon. It may have been because he had to drive twelve miles in the cold, but I took it to mean that she thought he had such a poor case. My sister and I were allowed to go to the funeral, be-

cause there was no one to leave at home with us, and we were both anxious to go. I was keen to hear the case for the defense.

It was a bitterly cold day. The minister's cheek was frozen inside of his big storm-collar when he came stamping into the room. But his heart was not chilled, nor were his powers of description. He drew a picture of the heavenly country which I have never forgotten, and when concluding he declared that God was able to do for us "exceedingly abundantly more than we could ask or think."

Nothing could have been more satisfactory to me than that challenge. I made a resolve at that moment that I would do my best for the dead woman. She would have the right sort of heaven if asking and thinking were all that was needed. My sister, three years older than I, who could do everything infinitely better than I could, was ready to do some asking and thinking, too. So we spent many happy hours arranging the heavenly home of our neighbor.

We gave her a white horse to ride, a red plush saddle, and a wine-colored habit. The color scheme was not very good, but we had never seen any kind of plush saddle other than a red one, and so had to take it. My sister wisely pointed out that when she was sitting on the saddle the red plush wouldn't show anyway. We gave her a rose garden of her own, with boxhedges, drawing heavily for these on a seed-catalog which had fallen into our hands. The garden had a marble wall, on which pink pigeons were perched in the

golden sunshine. We sent over the remainder of her family (meaning no harm to our young neighbors), and two buxom maids to care for them. I did not know what "buxom" meant, and I have a suspicion that my sister did not either, so I refrained from questioning. Then we put one whole evening on the reception given her on arrival, drawing shamelessly from the pictures of the ice-carnival in Montreal which came in the *Family Herald*. We even read from the Book of Revelation that part which says about "they shall not thirst any more, nor hunger any more, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes." Never did these healing words fall on more trusting hearts. Our faith was clear and plain. God would make it up to everyone who suffered here, and in that faith to this day I have never wavered.

I know there is a place of rest and beauty, where starved souls will expand and grow, and tired eyes brighten, and tired backs relax, and everyone will find his or her heart's desire.

I have a few questions I will ask if happily I arrive at the heavenly country. No doubt there will be certain days set apart when even a private member can interrogate the Government. Especially do I want to know how it is that a just God has allowed the sins of the fathers to be visited on the children. Even the virtues of the mothers, inherited by the same law, do not balance the account. I will ask about these and other things, and in the meantime I am ready to believe that God is in His heaven, and is not overlooking anything.

I had plenty of time to think when I was a little girl. We lived two hundred miles from a railroad. We got our mail in the Spring. My appetite was not cloyed by chocolate bars, or whetted by ice cream cones. A new pair of moccasins, with the smell of willow smoke, was exquisite rapture.

I came to know the spell and power of temptation when I was about eleven. I hated to go to bed, especially when some of the neighbors had come in. It seemed terrible to have to go away from the gay world of laughter and lamplight downstairs and be swallowed up by the dismal nothingness of the darkness under the rafters, where I slept; and I was afraid of the dark, too, though I would not confess it. But I had to go. My mother was Scotch, and knew her duty. She despised the feckless folk who let their little ones sit up.

One night I got a reprieve for one half-hour. It went by like the twinkle of a star. I had promised to go without a word. I went, but at the top of the stairs I turned to look back . . . It was surely no harm to watch for a minute. They were dancing a square dance. I knew every movement. I could "call off," too. I only intended to stay until I saw them dance the breakdown: "All join hands and circle to the left."

When I awakened my mother was putting me to bed and explaining a few things to me. Everyone knew what I had done; it's a wonder I hadn't fallen downstairs; that's what came of letting me

have the extra half-hour; a little girl like me at this hour—asleep in her clothes!

It sounded to me like the Judgment Day, and I had been found dead in my sins! I knew I had no defence, but it taught me something. Like Adelaide Proctor, since then "I know the poison and the sting of things too sweet."

It was when I was nine that I learned to pray. Of course, I always said my prayers. But I really prayed for the first time when my eldest sister was very ill with pneumonia. With no doctor nearer than Portage la Prairie, and only the simplest homely remedies, the case looked pretty hopeless, but over the snow, on snowshoes, came the minister, Rev. Thomas Hall, a devoted man of God long since gone to his reward. I remember the way he prayed beside Elizabeth's bed. I loved him for the way he put it up to God, wondering all the time how he knew what a wonderful girl she was, and how much we needed her and loved her. She lay with her shining brown hair spread out on the pillow, fighting for breath, while we knelt, awed and fearful. I remember I had my eyes shut tight, but I could see her face as plainly as if my eyes had been open. When the minister was done and I looked at my mother I knew something had happened. The fear had gone from her face. It seemed to me, too, that the responsibility had been lifted from us. A big, strong shoulder had been placed under our burden, and I understood from that moment that God hears prayers and sends help. It is when people cannot pray that they break.

I am dwelling on the happenings of childhood, because I believe we form our characters then. There is so little to be done for grownup people. We can comfort them in sorrow, entertain them when they are dull, confirm them in what they already believe, but it is hard to change their way of thinking.

I am not daring to minimize the work of grace, which can change any heart, but, speaking humanly, I say we can do but little for the adult.

And because I know that children are so susceptible to influence, so ready to respond to all that is heroic and noble, yet so easily beguiled by the worship of false gods, I tremble when I think of the evil influences which beat upon the young life of to-day.

I have never been much of a theologian. Doctrinal discussions have a mouldy taste and are dusty to the palate. I believe we all know enough to live by. It is not so much spiritual food we need as spiritual exercise. But I love the Bible for its stately music and the beauty of its diction, and the words of Christ have the power to set all the bells in my heart ringing. I long to know the mind of the Lord. I would like to know just what was in His mind when He cut short Peter's protestations of love by saying, "Feed My Lambs." That was a slogan for all of us to take from His lips. He tells us in these three words how to show our love. It is not, "Chant my praises," "Defend my theories," "Kill my enemies." No, no—but a greater, better, lovelier task: "Feed my lambs."

Of course, we cannot get away from the militant side of religion.

How very glad I would be to exercise my religion in a peaceable, blameless, mellow way; to sing hymns, read my Bible, teach dainty little dimpled darlings in Sunday school, carry jellies to the sick, entertain strangers, and let it go at that. Then I would have the joy of hearing people say, "She is a very sweet woman."

But here is the trouble. God demands our love, not just our amiability. Amiability never embarrasses any one, but love may, and often does kill. If ye say we love God, we must love the children of men—for they are the children of God. And if we love humanity we must hate humanity's enemies. The gardener who loves flowers must destroy the weeds. Toleration when applied to weeds, germs, dirt, mad dogs, and racial poisons ceases to be a Christian virtue. It becomes indifference and cowardice.

There are people who call themselves broadminded, but they mean by that they do not care what happens. They confuse broadmindedness with indifference.

I believe in being broadminded in respect to other people's opinions, particularly their religious beliefs, remembering that no one has a corner on light or grace. God reveals Himself in many ways. Religion is a bridge, and as such must have two qualifications: it must carry our weight, and it must endure in the tide of great waters. If it has these two qualifications, it is a good bridge, irrespective of size, color, or shape.

It is a deadly sin, I believe, to lay our axe to the arch of another man's bridge.

And so it is that religion is an explanation, and an emotion, and a code of ethics. It tells us something of how we come to be here, and where we are going. It is a code of ethics, inasmuch as it holds us to a certain standard of conduct. We cannot short-change the baker, or poison the neighbor's dog, with any degree of comfort. And it is an emotion, inasmuch as we find our hearts strangely warmed when we see the woods ablaze with autumn or hear the church bells ringing, because we know that God loves us, and has not left us comfortless.

My religion has taught me that life is a joyous adventure. I wouldn't have missed it for anything!

GOOD MILEAGE

THE old lady pushed the baby carriage into the shade of the Library, and sitting down on one of the green benches, closed her eyes and gave herself over to the ecstacy of the first quiet moment of the day.

"Thank God," she said reverently, "he's asleep at last."

It was very still, cool, and green in the park; only a few girls passed on their way home from work, and their footfalls were muffled by the cinder path. The old lady's thoughts were tinged with bitterness.

"What a life!" she said to herself. "After working forty years, doing big things, raising six children, and giving them all a good start, here I am pushing a baby carriage; a nurse maid at my time of life. And how amused Mary and Dick are at the idea of 'mother wanting a car of her own.' They think I am too old, and I am not yet sixty-five. I've driven horses all my life. Mary thinks I am quite satisfied to mind the baby. I hear her telling her friends, 'Mother is simply crazy about the baby,' and that is partly correct. I am crazy sure enough to go on this way."

Her meditations were interrupted by something striking the bench on which she sat. It was an

old tire rolled by a small boy of about six years, who shouted at her to look out.

The old lady waved her arms to enjoin silence, thinking of the occupant of the baby-carriage beside her and his light slumbers. Then the hoop-roller's guardian appeared. He pointed an indignant cane at the young offender.

"Come here, Ernest." His voice was a tired one, frayed with irritation.

"Are you a nurse-maid too?" asked the old lady.

"Worse than that. I understand even a nurse-maid has some authority, and gets her Thursdays. Will you meet my grandson, Ernest Raymond? He did not mean to frighten you, but he does many things he does not mean to do. He is really a nice child—at a distance, and in small doses."

The old lady smiled in her friendly way.

"I won't think much of him if he wakens my grandson, and it is not hard to do."

The old man sat on the opposite bench and wiped the top of his head with a white silk handkerchief.

"I hope that won't happen," he said seriously. "They do waken easily. I know Ernest has a young sister who is a nighthawk and hoot-owl. There is no reason in her. I can't stand children any more—I am ashamed to say it, but it is true."

The old lady looked at him understandingly.

"Don't I know it," she said. "And do your people think they are giving you quite a treat, when you take this young cyclone to the park?

and do they tell people that he is the greatest interest in your life?"

"Something to that effect. 'He keeps grandfather young,' I believe is the exact wording. They are all very good to me, you know."

"So are mine, only they boss me too much. Do you have to drink a lot of water, and eat spinach, and walk a mile every day?"

"How do you know all that?" the old man asked regarding her with surprise.

"They are all the same. And do they think you are too old to go to a political meeting? and if you ever fell down stairs, are they always telling you to be careful? and when they have visitors, do you feel rather out of everything and in the way? and do the visitors take it for granted that you are deaf, and shout at you?—and are you afraid to tell them you would like to drive the car, for you know what they would say?"

The old man came over and sat down beside her.

"Are you a mind-reader?" he asked.

"Oh, no," she laughed, "I am just an old lady who refuses to sit in a corner and knit. I am still young though my joints are stiff. I want to go on living, and knowing things, and young people cannot understand that. They think life is over for me, and I think my good times should be just beginning, for I have enough to live on of my own, and I haven't family cares, at least I shouldn't have any. But I seem to lack the courage to break away. I am tired of being a visitor in another woman's house. I want to shell peas

on my own verandah, and have some one coming for dinner, who will eat six of my lemon cookies."

I got the rest of the story from the mourners, the two bereaved daughters. "Wasn't it terrible? It seems they met in the Park, when they took the children out, and made it up, and they took turns minding the children and going to the garage to get lessons in driving a car . . . and they left us notes saying they did not want to argue with us, but were quite old enough to know their own minds, and said by the time we got the note they would be well on their way to Banff, and they were going to be married there. Now they have sent us cards from the Coast, all about how well the car is running, and how many miles they get to the gallon. Isn't it awful?"

HIGHER EDUCATION

IT has always been a bitter thought to me
That my boy Tom has had to go to work
Instead of going on to school, as most boys do.
He took the burden when his father died.
Poor little soul! I see him yet;—
Just how he stood, so little and so white
And such a man!—he said:
"We'll manage, mother; don't you cry or fret—
The Lord will help us someway to provide,"
And so He has.
The twins were only four
And Tom was eight. A better boy
No mother ever had . . .
The hardest thing
I find in being poor, is this—
The days of youth are all so quickly sped
And Tom's have gone in weariness and toil
While other boys have played. I cannot say
That I am reconciled—
I'm not.
I sometimes dream
That some one comes to me, and says, "I've watched
That boy of yours; I've seen him at his work,
So cheerful, willing,—he should have a chance—
That lad will make his mark.
And if it's just a matter of finance

Why that can be arranged . . ."
And then I wake
And watch the street lamp flickering outside
And wish and wish his father had not died.

Tom went into the mines; a call-boy there
He worked at night; each time I saw him go
Out in the dark, calling goodbye to me,
So brave and smiling,—I could have cried
My heart out.—I could see
His childhood passing.

My neighbor's boy is just the age of Tom
And he is just through High School now, and has
gone
Away to University, to study law.
He's all they've got, and they are proud to do
Their best for him, and he's a nice boy too.
The day he went Tom did not seem to mind
But I'll admit 'twas hard for me to be resigned.

To-day she called me on the phone to see
If I could come and help her,
And I went
Glad of a chance to earn an honest cent
And she pays well; and always makes me feel
She's glad to have me . . . Well, it seems
The students had a riot in the Hall—
The Arts and Meds she said, and in the brawl
They scuffed each other's clothes. 'Twas all
In fun, she said, and no one was to blame—
It seems they have to do it to preserve the fame
Of higher learning. Dick sent his clothes home

For her to clean. We pronounced the suit
A total wreck. She said she'd send
Another one, and I said it was well
She could, and it was then she told me . . .
It seems her heart is very sore
About a lot of things. Dick is no more
The boy who went away.
He only writes them now
When he is out of funds. And when he did come
home
Found fault with everything, and said
Our little town gave him the blues.
And not a word had he to tell
Of Socrates or Hannibal
Or things like that; smoked all the time;
Lay late abed; stayed out one night
And half the day, and came home bleary-eyed—
And this the boy on whom their
Hopes and pride have all been set.
She said she sometimes wishes that
He had never learned to read or write.
If this is what has come of it . . .
I couldn't find
A word to say to comfort her.
A thing like this
Cuts deep;
I didn't tell her my good news at all.
I did not speak of Tom, but she will hear
He has had another raise; that's two this year—
He gets a hundred now.
He goes two nights a week
To night school, and he won
The Road Race in the Y.,—

We're doing fine
We got the house fresh done, with kalsomine
And paint; I've got three places regular to clean,
And always can, by hurrying, get home in time
To cook the meals. The twins
Are both in High School going strong . . .
I hope it is not wrong
To feel so happy!

WHAT WE DON'T USE, WE LOSE

NO one can ignore the strange complex which is laying hold on people to do something, however worthless, that is out of the ordinary. We are disposed to explain it all, particularly the tree-sitting, by saying the people are publicity-mad—or just plain crazy. We may laugh at the woman, who finding that she could not coax or bribe her young son to come down from his tree, shinned up one herself, crying out, "I cannot be outdone by my own son," still we are a little bit disturbed over this strange outbreak, for we know there is something back of it.

It isn't a lack of music, or art, or beauty that drives people to do these absurd things. Beauty and art and music were never so easily attainable as they are now. Music floats down every village street; pictures come in with every mail delivery; with chain-broadcasts, air mail, movies, and talkies, entertainment is easier to obtain than ever before.

But entertainment is not enough. Everyone craves a sense of glory, of achievement. We want to endure and overcome, to try a tilt with fortune, like the two boys who drove their car across the continent in reverse. And the pitiful thing about it is that in our modern society, or our understanding of humanity, we do not seem able

to make provision for this impelling force; at least we have not been able to take up all of it, so the unused part runs out in absurdity—like the gas from Turner Valley which is burned before your eyes.

We were talking about this last night as we sat around the fire; and we were disposed to lay the blame on our easy ways of living. In the days when boys and girls had to weed the onions, and hunt up the cows, and keep the wood-box full, and walk two miles to school, they were not bothering the neighborhood by tree-sitting. The struggle for existence has kept many a person, young and old, in a normal state of mind.

From that we talked about the people who settled Canada, and how their heroism had full play. Then it was we got the story of the evening.

"Heroism is sometimes forced on people too," said one of the men. "I mean we find ourselves doing brave things that we never intended to do; and having begun there is nothing to do but go on . . . When I was ten, my people moved from Oxbow to Gilbert Plains, making the journey in the Fall, with covered wagons, and all the usual settlers' effects, cattle, horses, everything. About half way there, we reached the burnt country, over which the prairie fire had swept, and the feet of the cattle began to get sore; the patches of grass were scarce too, and we had to let them graze wherever there was grass. So it became evident that the wagons must go on, for the winter was likely to set in any day, and some one would have to stay behind with the cattle, and

bring them on at their own pace. And my brother and I were the unanimous choice. I was ten and he was nine, and we had an Indian pony and a tin cup. That was our equipment. I think we were quite pleased at first—I suppose that bears out what you were saying about the sense of adventure—to be trusted with forty-five head of cattle . . . With our tin cup we milked the bell cow, and that was our food supply . . . Shingles were driven in the cross roads to guide us, by our people who had gone ahead, and to find those shingles, particularly after we got into the Riding Mountains, became one of the problems of our young lives. That and to keep warm, and to urge on the tired young calves that just dropped in their tracks from weariness after they had walked a few miles."

"Had you blankets to sleep in? November nights are cold," we said.

"We had the pony's blanket, just a saddle blanket, and no overcoats, but we managed some way. I remember that some nights we were too cold to sleep, and the first night we got into the Riding Mountains we were too frightened to sleep. The wolves came down the mountains and howled all night, and we had no matches to start a fire . . . We may have been full of adventure the first day we were left behind, while the sun shone warm and bright, but when that dark November night, cold and piercing, came down on us without mercy, and the wolves seemed to be all around, we crept as far under the bell cow as we could, and held each other in an agony of fear. The

old cow was warm, and friendly and let us stay . . . and the night ended somehow. We were two weeks on the road; and slept only two nights in a house. And had two real meals which I will never forget. We knew there were people named Shields living in the mountains, but when we saw the house, in the early dawn, we were too shy to go to the door. But fortunately for us, Mrs. Shields saw us, and brought us in, and fed us, gave us some clean clothes and let us sleep in a bed.

"And Mrs. Field on the other side of the mountains when we reached her house did the same. The rule of the road was to feed anyone who was hungry, give them shelter, clean socks, and kind words, and these two women did that . . . In the mountains we stopped at an old cabin, and found there a man sick, and alone. We carried water for him in our tin cup and built up his fire, and sent help to him, too, when we met a man driving a wagon. We heard afterwards it was typhoid fever he had, but he recovered and we did not get the disease either.

"And one day we found our people—and delivered the forty-five head of cattle, not one missing, the pony, the pony's blanket, and the tin cup . . . And the next day the big storm broke and the winter set in; but we had won our race."

We sat awhile in silence, thinking of the two frightened little boys, with only a friendly cow for food and shelter, in that black night in November.

"Do you think you could do that?" someone

asked the fifteen-year old whose brown eyes were shining.

Before he could answer, the man who told the story said,

"He could—if he had to . . . We were no braver than other boys . . . We just had to go on."

EVERY WOMAN IS NOT A HOUSE-KEEPER

MRS. FROST, watching her two children and their teacher making their way under the big umbrella down the muddy road toward the school, turned back from the window with a sigh of despair.

"It is all wrong!" she said bitterly.

The fire was out; burnt toast littered the damper; dirty dishes were on the table. She had spilled a cup of coffee in her haste on the tablecloth, and the gloom from outside had settled in the corners of the kitchen with a dishwater grayness that made her shudder. How she hated it all!

"I am the world's worst housekeeper," she said sadly. "Things pile up on me so, and I see so many other things I want to do, and could do. I wish I had more time to help Bessie and Sam with their lessons; they are missing the joy of learning, Aunt Ruth is so prim, and regular, and mechanical in her teaching."

At noon, in spite of all her hard work, the luncheon did not go right. The tomato soup curdled as she served it, and she remembered then she had not put in the soda. Little Bessie, seeing her mother's embarrassment, did her best to say something cheerful.

"I like it curdled," she declared stoutly. "It

tastes like something that would be very good for you."

"I just can't cook; and that's that!" said Mrs. Frost. "No one works harder. I walk twenty miles a day, I am sure. Dick, you are a cheerful martyr, but a martyr all the same . . . . My mind wanders to other things—happier things—and something burns, or boils over. I never get a break. Anything that can go wrong, does go wrong . . . I often wonder if any one really likes housework, or do they merely endure it? What about you, Aunt Ruth?"

"I like it," said Miss Everton, "and I'll tell you what we'll do, Eva. We will give ourselves a break. I am tired of teaching. I never did like it, but it was about all I could do. You go back to school and teach for me to-day, and I'll clean up the house and get dinner ready. I have a miserable cold and headache and will be glad to stay in and work around at my ease in this nice, quiet house."

Dearmont School had a surprise that afternoon, when Mrs. Frost, in a burnt orange smock that brightened the whole room, came in.

"We'll build a fire first," she said. "It is such a raw day, we will enjoy the glow of it too. We can leave the door open. Every one loves a fire on a gray day like this."

"Please, teacher," spoke up Mattie White, "we wanted to put on a fire this morning, but Miss Everton said we better not begin fires too early."

But two of the boys had the wood and paper in the stove, and soon the cheerful crackle rang

out, and the children gathered around to enjoy its warmth. Mrs. Frost began to tell them about the first people who lived on earth, who had no houses but only caves. Their greatest comfort was the fire, around which they gathered at night, telling each other stories of the chase. Wolves might be howling outside or enemies lurking in the hills, but the fire was their friend. It cooked their food, warmed them, and kept the wolves away too.

Mattie White, Miss Everton's favorite pupil, feeling her responsibility, ventured to remind the new teacher that there was serious work to be done.

"Please, teacher, we take reading right after noon. We are at page 49."

Someone kicked Mattie White softly on the shin. Couldn't she leave well enough alone?

Mrs. Frost took her chair and, sitting near the stove, said cheerfully:

"I think there's room for all of you, if you sit on the floor in front of the fire, and now the door can be opened so we can see the coals."

She knew the floor was clean, Aunt Ruth would see to that.

"And we won't take the reading lesson on page 49. It does not suit us to-day, for it is called 'The Golden Window,' and ours are not golden to-day. We will take the 'Melancholy Days.' I will read it for you. I am sure it was a day just like this when Bryant wrote it. He had a cold in his head; and his hands were chapped, and he was feeling very sad. Now listen. If you want

to go and look out of the window, go, and see how well this describes what you see."

She read the first verse.

"Please, teacher," said Mattie, "we always take the hard words first, and pick out the nouns before we begin to read."

Mrs. Frost smiled back at Mattie.

"We aren't going to bother about the words. We are just going to have a good time to-day."

Mattie's troubled face grew more cloudy. She knew what happened to people who tried to have a good time in school.

"Now let us see how we would describe a day like this."

"The cows are all humped up like this," said one boy.

"They stand with their heads away from the rain and shake the rain out of their ears like this," said another.

"Mrs. Macdonald's clothes are on the line, all wet, and the baby's things too, and maybe he's needing them," said a motherly little girl, eldest of four.

"There's leaves in piles in the corner of the fence, just like he said," said Effie Jones from the window.

Mrs. Frost handed Effie the book.

"Read that line," she said. Effie took a minute to find it.

"Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the withered leaves lie dead," she read.

The biggest boy came over and looked at the

book in Effie's hand. Then got his own; and went over it.

"Our crows are on the straw-stacks instead of wood-tops," he said, "but that's all right, isn't it?"

"Read that line," said Mrs. Frost.

"And from the wood-top calls the crow, through all the gloomy day."

"Now we can read the whole verse." Every hand went up.

"Grade II should be at their number work," said Mattie. "It's on the board."

"O, let them listen," said Mrs. Frost. "They like this just as well as we do."

Grade II extended a disrespectful, but triumphant tongue in the direction of Mattie, and the reading went on.

"I never knew there was anything nice about a rainy day," said the big boy, "but, gee, it's swell, when you know how to look at it."

"My headache is all gone, and I had a lovely afternoon," said Miss Everton, as the family sat down to a good hot meal. The house was clean and tidy, and every face at the table was a happy one.

"Why don't you teach us all the time, mother, and let Aunt Ruth keep house?" asked Bessie.

"That would suit me," said Miss Everton; "I've been wanting to get a position in some institution as matron, and to run your house for a few months will be good practice for me. And you

can easily get a good housekeeper, who will be glad of such a pleasant home, when I go."

"I'd love that," said Mrs. Frost; "what do you think, Dick?"

"Every lady to her liking," said her husband, as he helped himself to another biscuit.

"So the melancholy day was not a melancholy day at all. It was a golden window," said young Sam, who was one of the Grade II who had listened to Bryant's poem instead of doing his number work.

WHEN IN DOUBT, PLEASE YOURSELF

I WILL give you a theme to write on," said a girl whom I will call Sally Smith, but that is not her name. "I know something which should be said, and read at every family gathering; and if the advice were followed, it would save much trouble."

"That sounds attractive," I said. "Let us have it."

Sally Smith, who works in an insurance office, is the eldest of a family, and she and I often meet at the Business Women's Club.

"My theme is this," said she, as we waited for the dessert. We had disposed of the lamb chops and green peas, with all the accessories. "Families should be frank with each other, and speak their minds freely."

"Well, aren't they, and don't they?" I asked in surprise. One of my family had told me that very morning that I should give my green hat to the first rummage sale I heard of.

"No, they are too fearful of hurting some one's feelings . . . For example, we have a summer cottage at one of the Lakes, and we have gone there for years. But none of us like it. There's no fun in camping in the same place year after year, especially when there are so many places to go to. But this old place is full of associations,

mother says. There's the stump on which Bobbie, aged three, cut his hand, when he was chopping bullrushes! There's the pier Emily blew off one windy day when mother told her she should not go out. Well, anyway, each year we have gone, thinking we were pleasing mother, and dad, and now quite by accident we find out that mother rather dreads the two summer months. She finds the work hard without the conveniences of the city, but thought she must go every year for our sakes. Could you beat that? Every one being so agreeable that no one would tell the truth.

"But I got my lesson last week. If I have ever erred on the side of being too agreeable, I have had my punishment. But here comes the dessert. I will not spoil an honest piece of apple-pie with ice-cream on top by any such withering tale as this."

When the luncheon was over, and the last speech made, and the vote of thanks and everything, Sally and I went out together, and found a secluded corner, where there was no sign which said, "Do not sit on the Furniture," and she told me the story.

"I did not take my holidays this year, except week-ends at the Lake, but one nice little trip did come my way, and that was to drive my brother's car to Lake Louise, one Saturday, and come back on the train that night. I love that road to the mountains of Lake Louise; it grows more beautiful to me every time I have driven over it, and I was greatly pleased at the thought. Ed's car is a lovely little roadster, just a new one. And I

wanted to go alone. I love being alone . . . being the eldest of eight, I suppose . . . Then I began to think, and that's where I made my mistake. I should have taken my lovely trip in humbleness and gratitude of heart. But I began to think I should take some one, and some one who does not get many pleasures, which brought me to consider Mrs. Rawson. She is mother's cousin, but not a bit like mother. But she lives in an apartment all alone, and no one bothers much about her. And, the more I thought of it, the more plainly did it seem my duty, and I had quite a glow of virtue when we started out.

"The day was beautiful; golden sunshine and the mountains clear cut, blue and white, coming out to meet us. It was the sort of a day that would take the meanness out of any one, you would think, but Mrs. Rawson's mind seemed to be obsessed with the gory details of operations. I tried not to listen, and opened my heart to the green and gold foliage of the hills; the blue and green flashes from the river, as it hurried along beside the road; the tawny fields dotted with stooks, but I couldn't escape it all, and so I got quite a barrage of 'gas-pockets,' and 'proud flesh,' and the sad but altogether undeserved fate of those who disobey the doctor's orders.

"When we approached the mountains, and the road ran in the cool green shadows, I hoped she might fall silent in the presence of these towering monsters. And she did for a few blissful moments . . . But about the Old Park Gate she revived and plunged into a detailed and pictur-

esque account of the domestic relations that prevail in the apartment in which she lives, determined that I should know the bitter truth about them all.

"When we went into the Chalet for lunch, that wonderful place where the gold of the poppies outside reappears in the golden lights of the room, we had a table in the window and could look right into the loveliest spot the world holds, with its snowy glacier reflected in the placid lake below. It always takes my breath away. But not so with Hattie Rawson!

"She leaned over to me, and asked me to notice the man and woman at my left. I told her I saw nothing unusual about them. I had seen five thousand like them. But in a voice that boomed across the room she confided in me she knew them, and they had not paid their rent for two months.

"She met someone she knew after lunch, and I got a good half hour to watch the poppies nodding in the wind, and see the veils of clouds drape themselves around the mountain tops. But when I went over to tell her we must be on our way to the station, I heard her say:

" 'The drive is a bit tiresome . . . I had to give up a very nice party to come . . . but I could not very well refuse my niece, (her mother is my cousin you know). 'I could see she was rather nervous about driving alone.'

"So now," Sally concluded, "this is my slogan; it may sound a little selfish but there's wisdom in it: 'When in doubt, please yourself.' Then you are sure that one person is pleased."

WISE WOMEN KNOW THEIR OWN VALUE

WHEN she awakened, the first yellow beam of sunshine was rippling on the wall, and for a moment or two she lay thinking of little Paul Dombey and the golden water that wavered and paled and faded in the grim old house in Portland Place . . . But she knew it was not a time for lingering. This was another day, and she must be up and at it, though Thursday was always her easiest day, with the washing and ironing done.

She gave a general call to the family, the formal notice of motion, and then went downstairs to get the day started. She put on the coffee; straightened the living room; removed apple-cores, candy papers, ginger ale glasses; picked up the magazines, and sorted out the newspapers; set fire to the accumulation in the fire-place; straightened the curtains, and rugs; wiped the finger marks from the radio . . . all the time directing the traffic upstairs. "Hurry, Billy! Get in ahead of Harold. You know how long he stays . . . No, my time isn't fast. Yes, you must have a bath, Tom."

By nine o'clock, she had all her family fed and out, except Enid, who was having her holidays and enjoying the luxury of a long sleep. Just as she began the dishes, the mail came in, and a

card from the Library stated that Billy's book was overdue, and if a messenger had to be sent it would cost fifty cents. A ten minute search revealed the book under the cushions of the chesterfield.

Before she started the dishes, she took half an hour to read the letters and the paper. She read in the report of an address the number of men who are out of employment in this country; read about a new machine that will do the work of one hundred men; read, too, a bishop's denunciation of childless homes. She was reading the editorials when the bell rang. It was a college student, one of a family of thirteen he told her proudly, soliciting subscriptions to pay his way through college. Before she got back to the table where she left the mail, a little girl called to sell tickets for a garden party in aid of the Children's Home.

She prepared the scalloped potatoes for lunch and washed the dishes, answering the phone five times. Then went upstairs to make the beds, ignoring the phone, until the ring sounded that she and her husband had agreed on.

"Say, Mary," he said, "Bob Brown and Ed Peters are in town. I would like to bring them for lunch . . . Is that all right? Give them a beef loaf . . . They are tired of hotel meals. I know they will enjoy it, and I've bragged to them about your rhubarb relish . . . Don't go to any trouble, just something simple . . . Good girl! I knew you would. And, Mary, we are going to play golf afterwards. Lay out my things, will

you? And that collar on my shirt is a little tight. Can you let it out?"

She left the beds then, and went to the kitchen. When the good smell of a baking beef loaf came upstairs, Enid, kimona clad, and drowsy, came into the kitchen.

"Mother, I don't want to go back to-morrow. I want to have some of the girls in. I wish you would phone the office. You are the diplomat for this family. I won't have any more holidays for a year, and I've done plenty overtime. And, mother, make Harold pay me the money I loaned him for his insurance. I want to get that coat. If you weren't so stiff about instalment buying, I could have had it. But I guess you are right. And, mother, Ethel's shower is going to be all homemade things. Could you get a set of coat holders done? It's next Wednesday; pink, mauve and green. You're a dear. My! that smells good. I'll be down for lunch!"

When the luncheon was over, and the golfers on their way, she swept the dining room, washed the dishes; they seemed endless. She wondered why we have to use so many. One phone call from the school nurse told her Billy's teeth needed attention; so she made an appointment with a dentist for Saturday morning. Then she went to her desk and worked on the notices for her society. By this time she was glad of the chance to sit down. But there were flowers in the garden that should be picked . . . She might get Billy to do them when he came home, if she could remember

. . . But he had to practise. No, she would go. It was lovely to get out in the sunshine.

She picked the flowers, making them into little bouquets, sweet peas and baby's breath; marigolds and bachelor's buttons with mignonette; gladioli by themselves . . . Billy could deliver them for her to the apartment.

She remembered then she had not been able to get her twenty minute sleep after lunch, and she sat down, thinking she would read a few minutes. The sunshine was so bright, it had left her a little tired. But a few minutes rest would be all she needed.

A new magazine had come in with the afternoon mail. She opened it and read the title of the first article.

"The Idle Woman—and the Vanishing Home!"

Then Harold phoned to ask her to send his best suit to the cleaners, he must have it for Saturday night; and would she please look at his dress shirt to see if it would do again.

Before she got back to the article, the Enumerator called at the front door, and she gave him the information he wanted, regarding the people who lived there and their occupations. Robert Wilson, her husband, salesmanager; Harold Wilson, bank clerk; Thomas Wilson, Normal student; Enid Wilson, stenographer; William Wilson, public school student.

"And you," said the young man, "are Mrs. Wilson?" He made a wavy line in the column marked "Occupation" and volunteered the information, "Some women do not like to have their oc-

cupation put down as 'Housekeeper' or 'Married Woman,' so I generally just leave it." He smiled at her brightly. But she did not smile back. She was thinking.

It was getting on toward evening, and her feet were tired, so just for a few minutes she was disposed to resent the implication that she was a person of no occupation. But not for long. She put the potatoes in the oven for supper, and started one of Enid's coat hangers.

"There may be no word for it, but I know," she said, for Mary Wilson was one of the wise women of the world who know the value of their work. She knew she was the string on which her whole family was threaded: a cord of silk, smooth, strong, and enduring.

THEY ARE NOT ALL MARRIED

WITH two pretty sisters for a perpetual standard, Hilda Collins had no illusions about her own beauty-content. Her skin was swarthy; her cheek bones high; her mouth large. So at an early age she abandoned all hope of marrying a millionaire, or a foreign prince, and as the relentless years rolled on the list of exemptions grew longer, and longer.

But she soon discovered that there are compensations in being homely. She was a favorite bridesmaid at weddings; served at teas; fourth hand at bridge and many a married woman's first choice when there was one seat to be filled in the car.

When she began to teach, she found a fierce joy in bringing beauty where none had been before, for her first school was in one of the most desolate parts of the prairie misleadingly called Ferndell. Being no rival to anyone in the matrimonial market, she excited no jealousies and could get everyone to work with her.

At the end of the second year, Ferndell school had a red roof, gleaming white walls, frilled curtains, a flagged walk, a hedge of caragana, small but hopeful, and flaming flower beds. She had a dramatic club among the young people; a reading circle for the women, and her school ac-

tivities were featured in one issue of the *Teachers' Magazine.*

After five years at Ferndell, she was called home to care for the family of one of the pretty sisters, who had to go to a hospital for a long period. And after that, being the only unattached woman in a large family connection, she was often called on, in times of domestic stress. For, as the prettiest sister said fretfully, "Hilda always had the best of everything and the least she could do was to help one of her family in trouble." But when no one was having a baby, or an operation, or a holiday, Hilda taught, and always made it a full-time job.

I first met her during the war when there was a teacher-shortage. She sent a letter to the Department of Education, signifying her intention of taking a school. She said she would go anywhere; had no objections to going into a foreign district; and could teach music. She was quite frank about her age, but softened the blow by saying she had never been sick a day in her life.

I saw her again in the days of the drought following the war. She was growing older, darker, and thinner. She wore a waterproof the color of mouldy hay, a stiff black hat, pulled well down on her head, stout boots, with square toes. She came in to tell me she was willing to go to some district where the crop had utterly failed.

"I have enough clothes to do me," she said. "Clothes do not mean much to me. I can live for two years anyway, and that may see better times."

When I tried to thank her, she made light of it.

I had news of her from time to time from one of her nieces who spoke of her as "poor Aunt Hilda." Then one day I met the prettiest sister. Her first question was in a tone of proud complaint. "Have you heard the latest about Hilda?"

I shook my head.

"She is going to England," she said with pride. "She is going to lecture about Canada with all her expenses paid and a good salary." Then came the complaint. "Some people get all the breaks."

"I'm glad. She deserves it," I said heartily. "And no one could do such work better."

"Perhaps," the pretty sister agreed grudgingly. "But she knows I am not very strong, and I will miss her so. She doesn't seem to care. Women without children get so selfish!"

"Selfish!" I gasped. "Hilda Collins is one of the mothers of the race. She is one of the most unselfish women I ever knew."

But the pretty sister shook her head. "I don't know what Hilda has done more than the rest of us to deserve a chance like that. But she's so happy, she's like a bride—she's almost pretty."

This summer I saw Hilda. Happiness has transformed her. No one would call her unattractive now.

"Hilda," I said, "be careful. You'll be snapped up yet, with those red earrings and that saucy little hat!"

Hilda laughed.

"No. No danger; I am immune. 'Not wanted

on the passage' like the big boxes . . . I ceased to struggle earlier than most homely girls, and so saved myself a lot of grief and heart-burnings. And I have never been unhappy over it. I have had such joy in my work. And the work is absorbing. I wish you could see some of the children in those families of mine!"

I looked after her in admiration as she went quickly down the street, and I was more than ever convinced that the Lord knows what He is doing when He leaves some of the best women in the world unattached.

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

WEATHER beaten and gray it stands,
Tiny dot on the harvest lands—
Not very much to see!
Porch at the end, where the gophers play;
Smelling of crumbs, on a summer's day;
Row of windows, two or three,
Inside walls of smoky gray
Hung with torn and crooked maps;
A broken blind that taps and taps;
Not an attractive spot, you say?
No, but here in this lowly station
Slowly is working an ancient law
And a temple is rising, we call it a nation,
Without the sound of hammer or saw!

BEHOLD THE PIONEERS!

I WAS on the Peace River train travelling into that land of brief, bright summer, where, because of the long hours of sunshine the grain ripens in ninety days from the time the seed is planted; that land of rolling hills, rich pastures, and clear streams whose banks are tapestried with a million flowers; land of velvet dusks, purple distances, and heavenly stillness; where Nature is so prodigal with her gifts that the people forget that the winters are long and cold, and the market for their product is far away; a land that inspires a passionate faith, that does not waver or even argue. The Peace River people know their country, and know, too, that some day, the world will come knocking at their doors.

Looking at my fellow-passengers, I was speculating idly as to their reasons for "going in." I saw the typical close-shaven, weather-cured Englishman who just naturally took the out-trail; the cheerful commercial traveler ready to talk or listen, or play a game of cards, or hold an argument with anyone, ready too to give up his "lower," or hold a baby, or lend his paper, or carry a valise, or buy a meal for anyone who needed it. There were the man and his wife travelling to the Peace River country because it was the thing to do, and determined not to like

it. The district nurse going in, with compassion in her eyes, healing in her hands, and her suit cases full of antiseptics and ointments.

I was looking at a handsome young woman who sat across the aisle from me, two round fat babies beside her on the seat. They were quite as broad as they were long, and reminded me of those weighted kewpie dolls who cannot be slapped down. They were dressed in one-piece blue overalls, and beamed with health like their mother, and like her, had fine black eyes.

I began to talk to her, before the afternoon was over, and found she was going ninety miles beyond Peace River Crossing to a valley I had never heard of.

"Won't you be lonely?" I asked. "Are you sure you will have any neighbors?"

"I am sure I will not," she said with a flashing smile, "and I am glad of it. I am tired of people. That's why I am going. I want to get a chance to do as I like. All my life, I have had to consider other people's opinions. No, I won't be lonesome. We are taking cows and horses, dogs and cats, sheep and hens. My husband is there now."

"Then," I said, "it is not like being alone."

She twisted her mouth expressively. "He's rather a quiet sort of chap," she said frankly, "and not much company. But we'll manage . . . I soon found out, after I married him, that he wasn't what anyone would call a bright companion. I saw I had to do something for myself. So I got a few hens. Hens are real sociable and

chatty . . . Did you ever hear them come bursting out of the henhouse on a bright winter morning, each one telling her own story, and no one listening? . . . I like animals much better than people anyway. You don't have to answer them . . . and their feelings are not so easily hurt. They never want to tell you their troubles, and then warn you not to tell; and they won't pick up some little thing you've said and twist it into something you never thought of saying . . . . They won't say one thing to your face . . . and something else behind your back . . . and they won't listen in on the phone . . nor tell you how to raise your children or criticize your housekeeping, or be mad at you for not inviting them to your party, and they aren't always right—"

Her black eyes were snapping and her cheeks burning.

"I see," I said, "you have been living with your relatives or your husband's relatives, or both."

"Both and plenty!" she said grimly, "I'll say I have! The whole neighborhood is related to either one of us. But how did you know?"

"Your description was unmistakable," I said. "Relatives have little ways all their own, and yet remember if you needed help they would be the first to give it."

"Yes, but I'd rather die than take it. They would never forget it. No, I think I did the right thing. I decided to pull out. They were beginning to spoil my disposition. I was in so many quarrels, and John was growing like them. So we just sold out and I got everything squared

away, for I told each family what I thought of them and why we were going . . . and we parted good friends. I left no unfinished business. All I want is a good, clean chance in a new country. Why break your back picking sow thistle when there's millions of acres that never saw a sow thistle? And I mean that both ways, mostly figuratively. John will do what I tell him when I have him all to myself. We will raise our own help. When we have six children we can get a school. We will have three hundred and twenty acres of our own, and grazing rights from there to the horizon."

She looked at her watch.

"It is time to eat," she said, looking for the first time at the two black-eyed ones who had listened to everything she said. "Come, boys, Track!"

She arose and stretched herself like a graceful young animal, and the two round babies, going into reverse, wriggled off the seat and to my utter astonishment followed her down the aisle. The elder of the two may have been three years old, but the wee one was no more than a year and a half old, but he trotted after his brother undisturbed by the swaying of the train.

I looked after them in admiration.

"There go the pioneers!" I thought.

Even as Abraham, having some trouble with Lot, spoke up and said, "Oh, all right; have it your own way," and went out, not knowing whither, so this woman was taking the unknown trail in the pursuit of happiness, life, and liberty;

and she, too, like Abraham, would found a colony in some valley of the North. She would meet hardship, loneliness, discouragement, but her stout heart would be ready to meet what came, having seen the vision and heard the heavenly voices that spoke of freedom and space and independence.

And as the brilliant sunshine paled into the twilight of approaching night and the settlers' houses grew scarcer and smaller and lonelier, I wondered how many of these intrepid people were here because of a family row!

THE ROARIN' GAME

CURLING is a splendid sport for women. Not only does it provide healthful exercise, opportunities for self-control, and good sportsmanship, but being primarily a man's sport, it makes for better understanding between men and women. A man can understand how his wife may be late in getting home from a curling game much easier than if she has been at a missionary meeting.

MAGIC

SHE parks her baby with a friend,
She piles her dishes in the sink,
Pulls on her sweater, grabs her broom,
And hurries over to the rink.
She would have had her dishes done,
But she was drawn to curl at one.

She wins her game—and so is drawn
To curl again at half-past three;
This is a bear-cat of a game
Against an ancient enemy.
When she comes out, the lamps gleam high,
Like stars against the dull, gray sky.

Now by all things that we have learned
Of husbands and their ways,
This woman's man will angry be,
And grievous trouble raise
When he comes home, at close of day,
And finds his dear wife—far away.

He goes and brings his offspring home,
He lights the kitchen fire,
He sets the supper on to cook;
No trace of slumbering ire;
But knowing what we do of life
We tremble for the erring wife!

At half-past six her step is heard,
  Her voice is full of joy:
"O Bill!—I didn't do a thing
  To Mrs. Pomeroy!
I took her out with my last stone,
And we were one up coming home."
And as he stirred the baby's food
He said, "I'm glad you lammed her good!"

ADAM'S FALL

MAN cannot live in idleness and grow,
I wish he could. I wish it might be so.
I'm sure when Adam lived in Eden's bowers
Wooed by the birds, and comforted by flowers,
He wished it too, and liked the way of getting
All that he wanted without toil or fretting.
That was the life! No worry, toil, or sorrow;
No thinking of that tiresome thing—tomorrow.
Too bad it did not last; the serpent came
And Adam fell, and great has been his blame.
I'm not so sure! Perhaps the snake was wise;
The fall of Adam may have been his rise!
The only creatures that can live in ease
Day after day, and not be hurt, are these:
The long-haired Persian—and the Pekinese!

CONFIRMATION

THE Garden Party for the Sunset Home was a gorgeous one; one of those careless, easy-going affairs that require such careful planning. It was held on a beautiful chiffon-velvet lawn, where great beds of hydrangeas, with their huge globes of pink and blue flowers, gave a touch of exotic splendor to the scene. Under the fruit trees, loaded with yellow and red apples, and purple plums, stood the tables, where women, in brightly colored clothes, drank tea and consumed ribbon sandwiches with great gayety. The amber sunlight of August, like a gold frame, flattered each color into greater brilliance and beauty.

"It would have been nice to have brought the old people here to-day," said one woman to me. "Everything is so lovely, too bad no one thought of it." I agreed with her.

Somewhere near me a hard-voiced woman was talking about the stock market, and the fortunes that had been lost . . . I turned away. The day was too beautiful for that; I was in accord with the orthophonic which was tunefully advising everyone to give themselves a pat on the back—a pat on the back . . .

But suddenly the strident voice mentioned a name which beat down the song; and won from the hydrangeas and the ribbon sandwiches and everything.

"I keep thinking of old Mrs. Concord to-day," she said, "as I look around. Many a time she gave her lovely grounds for parties like this, and now . . . Yes, they lost everything. Poor Chester, he was the only boy . . . It will never be known for sure . . . It may have been monoxide . . . but of course he was frightfully involved. Mrs. Concord put up all her jewelry, silver, and even her furs to clear his name, and walked out of the big house with a hand bag . . . She is in the Sunset Home now . . . has been there a year . . . No, I've never seen her. It would only embarrass her."

I did not hear any more; the party was over for me; the row of tables across the lawn heaved drunkenly; the sunshine paled and hardened, and the wind that had just stirred the leaves of the apple-trees, took to itself an edge of ice.

I found the hostess, and told her I had had a lovely time, and made my escape—I had to find out for sure.

A mutual friend, to whom I phoned, confirmed the story.

That night, instead of sleeping, I thought rather bitterly of life and its ironies. Why should disaster come to Mrs. Concord? . . . I knew her first in a little prairie town, to which I had gone to teach. The Concords owned the big red brick house on the hill. Mrs. Concord was everyone's friend; she led the choir, played the organ, entertained visiting ministers, gathered in the strangers on Sunday evenings; a gracious, charming woman . . .

I met her again, in the city, before the war; and afterwards, when her two eldest boys had gone. The Red Cross women met in her house, to roll bandages . . . And again I saw her, all in black, for the two boys were not among the men who returned. But she carried on. Later we went to the same church and I was a member of her class. Mr. Concord did not recover from the loss of his boys, but she and Chester, the youngest boy, a handsome young fellow, lived on in the big house, where I was often a guest . . . Having gone farther west, I had not seen her now for some years.

I thought that night, with a sore heart, of the psalmist's words about his having never seen the righteous forsaken, and wondered what he meant. Surely to eat the bread of charity in that bleak house that sits with its back to the road, is to be forsaken . . . The next day I went to see her.

The matron received me, and when I made known my errand drew me into a small reception room and shut the door.

"Yes, she is here, and she is a fair marvel. I don't think she realizes what it means. Not a word out of her about her past life. If our way of living seems plain, she doesn't show it . . . And the things she has done for the old buddies here! She should have a salary from the Board, and I've told them so . . . She sings and plays for them, reads to them, writes their letters, reconciles them to their families, listens to their woes and comforts them . . the hardest of them, and we have some tough ones . . . I'll find her now and send her down."

Mrs. Concord, tall, slim, and stately, came in. If there was any embarrassment, it was mine.

"How good of you to find me out!" she said. She was the same graceful woman, a little thinner, her hair whiter. She was dressed in a black lace dress, without even a ring on her finger.

"It's all right," she said smiling; "I am really quite happy here. It was the best thing to do. I had a niece who would have given me a home, but you know an old person might be an embarrassment."

"You," I said, "could never be that!"

"One never knows. I'll probably live to be a hundred. Anyway, here I am, and I am quite happy. The matron thinks I do not remember. . . . She has been wonderfully good to me."

Then she sat down beside me, and I took her shapely little hand in mine. I could not keep back the tears.

"We've talked a lot about God's goodness," she said simply, "and His care; His perpetual care; how He watches over us and will not let us stumble or fall."

I nodded, and there was a choking silence. Then her voice rang out, a young voice, full of triumph—

"It is all true," she said, "every word of it. I have come through the fire, and I am not burned; not even singed."

She lifted my hand, and put it on her head; I marvelled at the glow in her face.

"You see," she said, "it is not wet. And I have come through the flood, but not once did

the billows go over my head. Not once. Every anchor held . . . God does not send a cordon of angels to help His people any more, He sends work, and strength to do it. And I have something to do here, too. My life is not over. I am still living. One night a week ago the matron wakened me. One of the old men was dying, and calling for me . . . the waves were rising, he said, they were going to swallow him. At sunrise he died quietly with a smile on his face. Think of that! I was able to comfort a soul in mortal agony . . . No, no, do not feel sorry for me. I am not even grieving over Chester . . . Somewhere in the many mansions, I will find them all. I always believed the promises; I believed and hoped they were true, but now . . . I know!"

When I came away, I looked back at the square, drab house that sits with its back to the road. Its western windows were gleaming with the glory of the sunset.

It was a dull house no longer, nor can it ever be to me, for within its gray walls, I saw the glory of God.